Sept. 27, 1993

THE NEW YORKER

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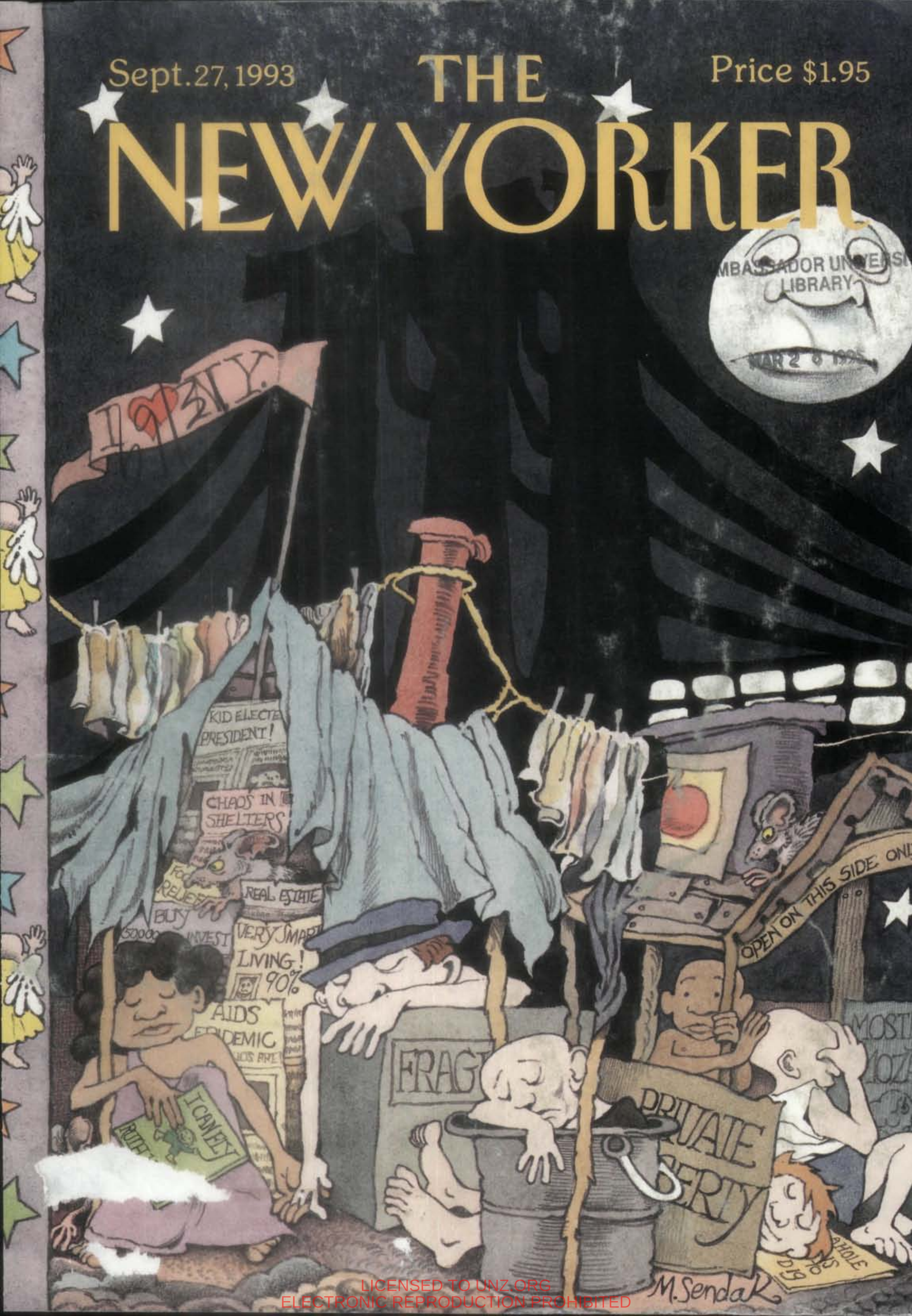
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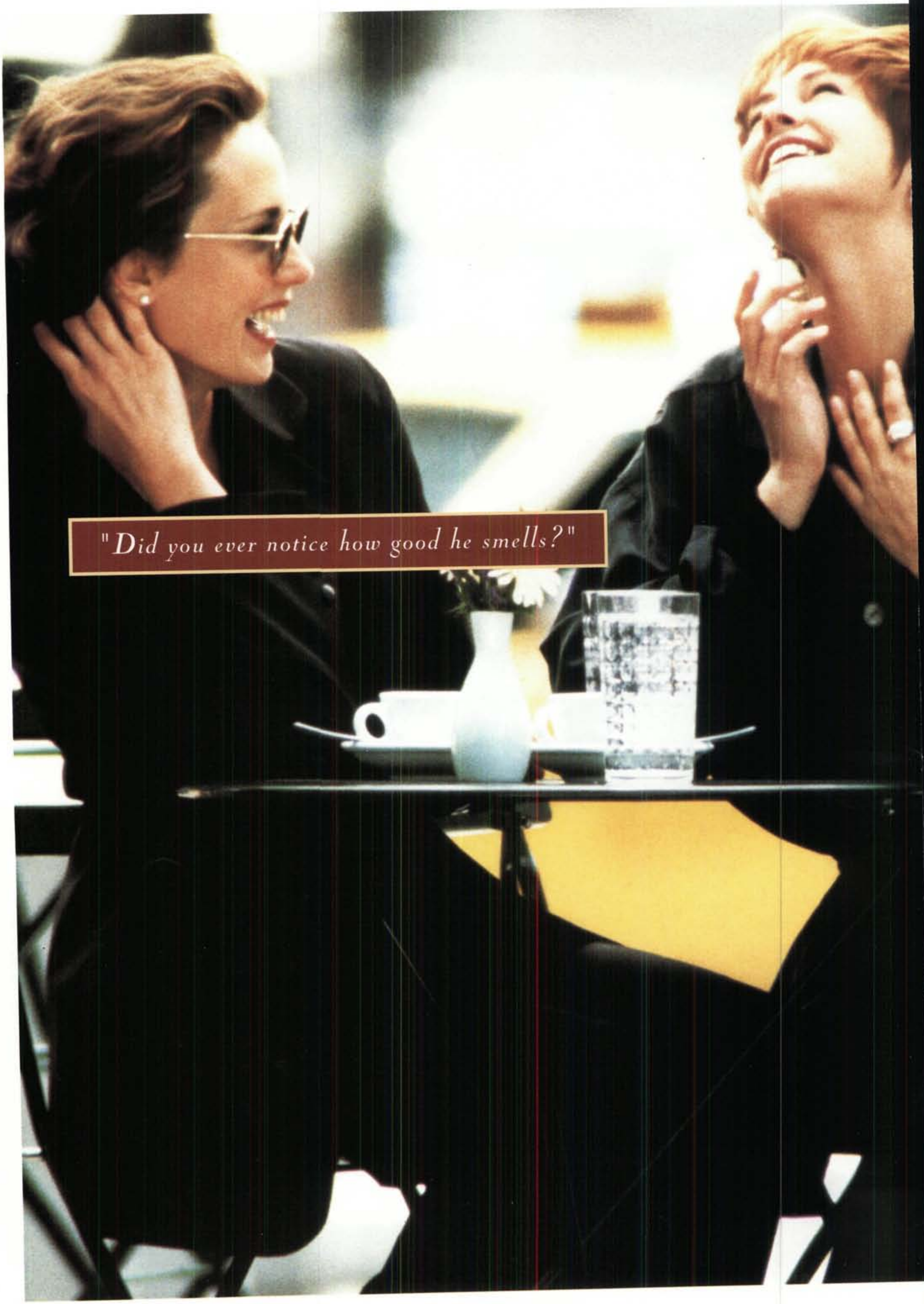
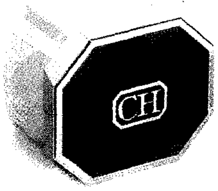

"Did you ever notice how good he smells?"



GEORGIA: *I finally went out to dinner with him last night.*

JACKIE: *Just the two of you? Where did you go?*

GEORGIA: *Mario's.*

JACKIE: *Mario's? The food is terrible.*

GEORGIA: *I didn't notice. I don't really even know what I ate.*

JACKIE: *Really?*

GEORGIA: *You should have seen him. He was so sweet. He spilled his wine all over my dress.*

JACKIE: *Adorable.*

GEORGIA: *And then when he reached over to give me his napkin, he knocked over his water glass.*

JACKIE: *Hilarious.*

GEORGIA: *Well, it was. We couldn't stop laughing. We just had to get out of there. We laughed all the way back to my place.*

JACKIE: *Your place?*

GEORGIA: *Well, I was soaked. And besides...*

JACKIE: *Besides.*

GEORGIA: *Did you ever notice how good he smells?*

JACKIE: *Frankly, no.*

GEORGIA: *He wears the most wonderful cologne.*

JACKIE: *Dare I ask what it is?*

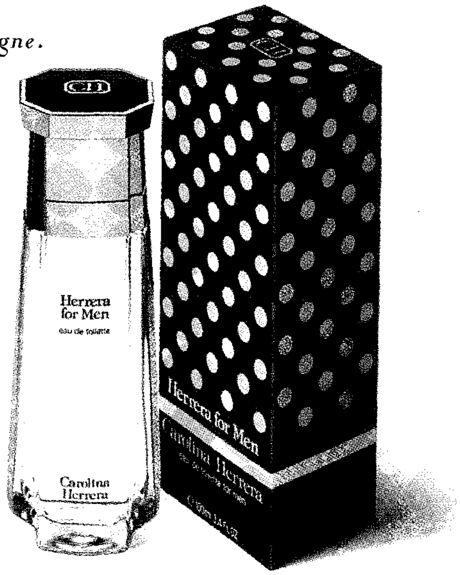
GEORGIA: *Well, it comes in a box with dots.*

JACKIE: *Dots?*

GEORGIA: *Dots.*

JACKIE: *So. Now we're back at your place...*

GEORGIA: *Jackie, how's your mother?*



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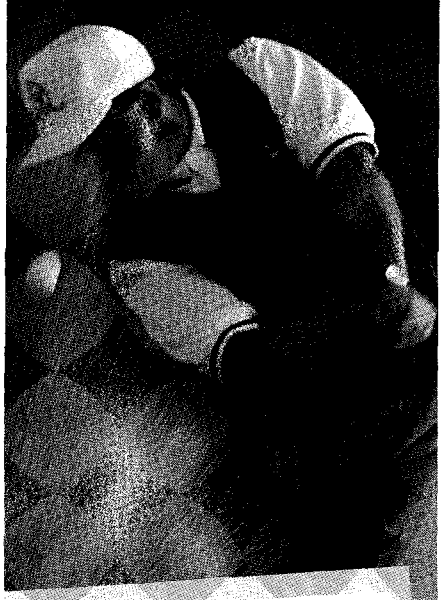

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THE NEW YORKER

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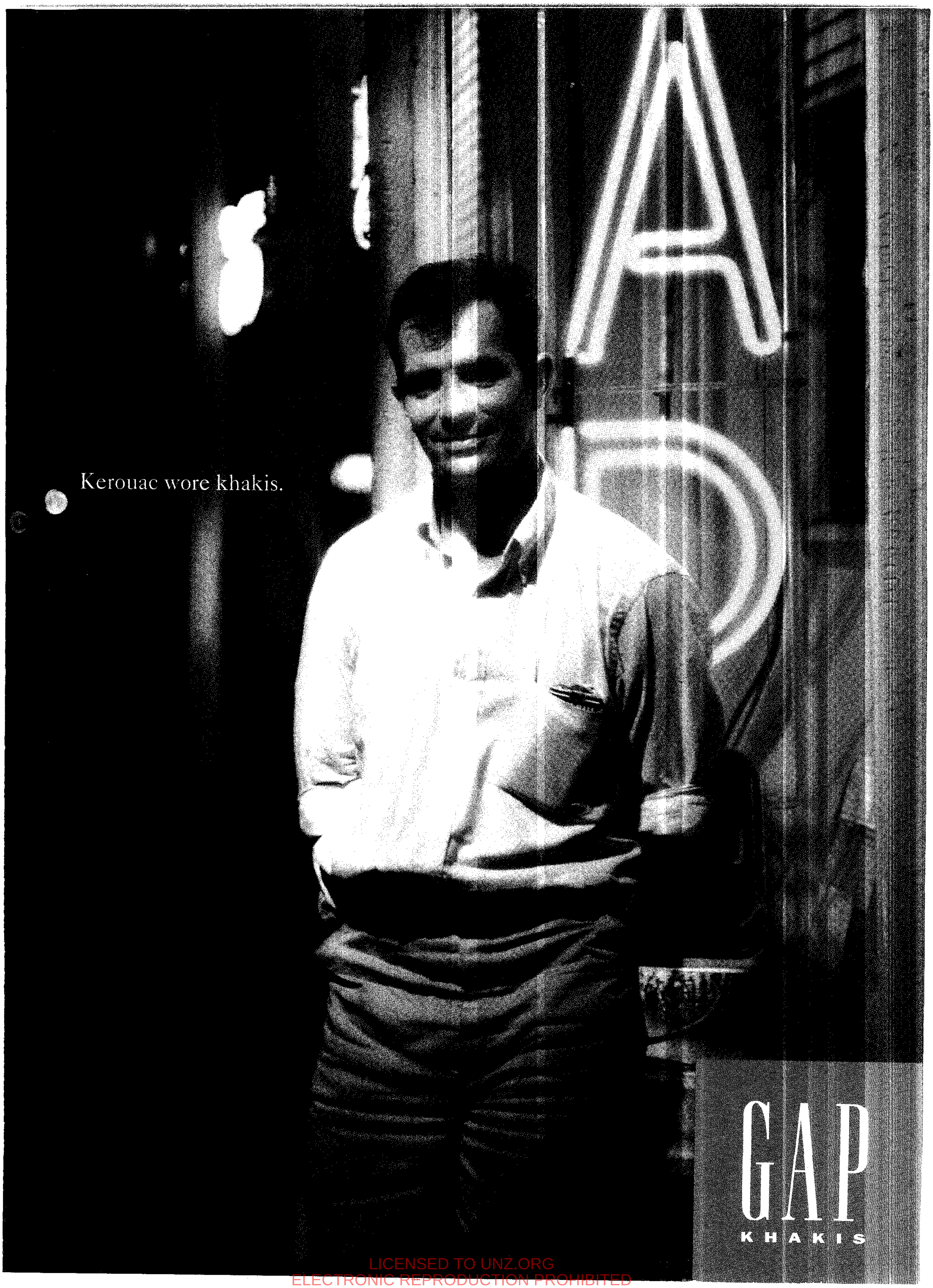
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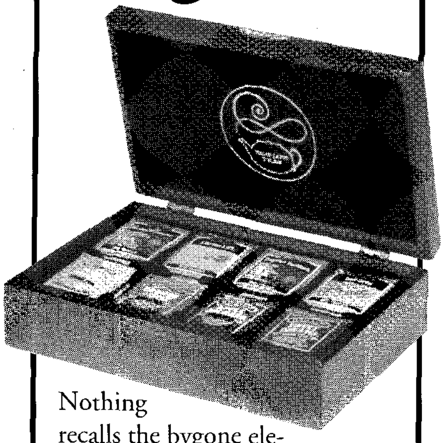

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COMMENT

DEMOCRACY AND MEGA-SCANDAL

It sounds crazy, but almost seven years after the Iran-Contra scandal became public, and a few weeks before Lawrence Walsh's office finally releases its special prosecutor's report on that affair, we still don't know the half of what went on during the Reagan and Bush Administrations. The years pass, the scandals grow. We knew long ago about the illegal funding of Contras in Nicaragua during the period in the mid-nineteen-eighties when Congress expressly forbade such a policy, but only this past spring did we learn about the State Department's poker-faced deceptions regarding human rights in neighboring El Salvador. We knew long ago about the secret Iran policy that traded arms for hostages, but only years later did we learn about the five-billion-dollar secret Iraq policy next door. We knew long ago that Star Wars was never going to provide anything remotely resembling the promised missileproof space shield. Now we are told by Tim Weiner in the *Times* that, according to four former Reagan Administration officials, Star Wars was built on a fraud, aimed at the gullible Soviets but having the convenient side effect of fooling Congress into coming across with the thirty-billion-dollar funding. The *Times* story was disputed by the current Secretary of Defense: he explained helpfully that "deception did not take place, although a program to practice deception existed." And how many other programs to practice deception may have existed, how much further the scandals of the Reagan-Bush era may yet creep outward from Iran and Nicaragua and upward into the heavens—this no one can say. The thing just keeps growing. It is the monster from the slime.

The blame for what has by now become the Iran-Iraq-Contra-Salvador-Star Wars scandal is sometimes said to lie in certain procedural glitches—perhaps in a too vague distribution of powers between the White House and Capitol Hill, perhaps in some incorrect understandings within the President's National Security Council. But the simplest explanation was always political. During the nineteen-eighties, the American people kept electing a mostly liberal

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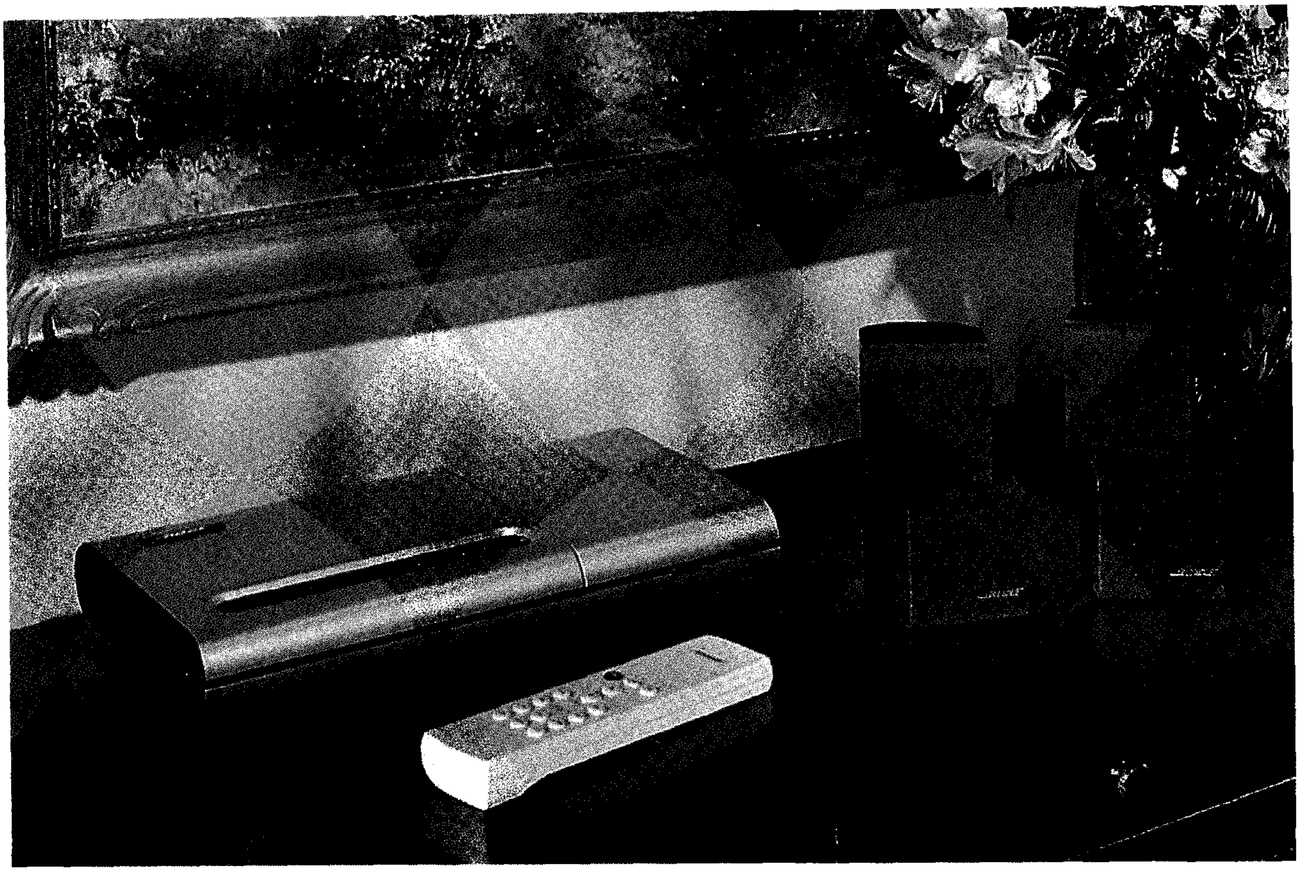

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and Democratic Congress, but they also, in their wisdom, twice elected Ronald Reagan, whose views on foreign policy were never a secret.

Mr. Reagan, whose mind was capacious enough to hold many contradictory ideas at once, honestly believed both that the Soviet Union was doomed and that it was on the verge of achieving a worldwide triumph, and that America had no alternative but to resist the Soviet victory in every reasonable way, plus a few ways that were not so reasonable. And, if it now turns out that the unreasonable ways were pursued with gusto in remote zones of the planet, who can honestly claim to be surprised? It can even be said that, if the Constitution was flouted by desperado policies, democracy in a looser sense was not flouted at all—that the voters have only themselves to blame for the constitutional crises that followed. The monster from the slime turns out to be slime from the monster, who is no one but all of us, the voting public.

Defenders of the Reagan-Bush scandals have always pointed, in hindsight, to ultimate success, which justifies all things. But trading arms for hostages had the effect of encouraging more kidnappings. Shoring up Iraq helped bring on the Persian Gulf War. The policy of making unprincipled alliances in Central America tied the United States to Manuel Noriega (our supposed ally against Marxism-Leninism) until it was too late, and thereby brought on the Panama invasion of 1988. Illegal aid did not prevent the Contras from being defeated militarily by that same year. And when relatively free elections came to Nicaragua, in 1990, it was because of pressure from Nicaragua's economic failures (which followed inexorably from Sandinista economics, not from external aggression) combined with the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

Salvadoran coverups merely kept the death squads in business. The Soviet economy had no strong points at all outside vodka sales; competition not just in military spending but in every field, from bluejeans to high tech, conspired to wreck the Soviet economy. And who was it that a few weeks ago was affirming, in a *Times* op-ed piece, that Star Wars was not only the Soviet Union's undoing but also the soul of veracity? It was Robert C. McFarlane, Mr. Reagan's national-security adviser—the man who showed up in Teheran carrying a cake for the Ayatollah, and who seems even now unable to comprehend what he and his colleagues actually achieved: that as a result of deceptions and illegalities wars were needlessly brought on or stoked, massacres were encouraged, the credibility of American arms programs was diminished, untold billions of dollars was wasted, clouds of mendacity and bad faith circulated everywhere—and all for nothing.

If the procedural mysteries of Washington cannot really account for what occurred, it's nonetheless true that constitutional questions were raised, and now those questions ought to be settled. But how? To guarantee that some new Administration, or even the present one, will never resort to shady measures in the future is obviously impossible; under desperate enough circumstances even the most law-abiding of Presidents will be tempted to cut corners. Still, if we can never entirely insure constitutional fidelity in the future, we ought to be able at least to strengthen it retrospectively, by dealing with its infractions in the past; that is, by causing a few fear-inducing punishments to follow upon the crimes. Yet in the present political atmosphere how can even that come about?

The principal reason that the Walsh prosecution team was unable to go beyond securing a mere nine unoverturned convictions in the Iran-Contra affair was that the rules that had been established for the congressional hearings inhibited its efforts, and the reason for those inhibiting rules was the political strength of the allies of those who created the scandals. Today, the Clinton Administration could take up some new investigations and prosecutions, especially in regard to the secret Iraq policy, the El Salvador mendacities, and the Star Wars deception. But in the light of the Administration's recent decision to drop the investigation of the Iraqi-loan scandal the zeal of Democrats of the present for punishing Republican misdeeds of the past looks mild indeed. And here, again, who can be surprised? President Clinton was elected with less than a majority. He needs Republican support for the North American Free Trade Agreement, for health-care reform, and for his schemes to reshape the government. Understandably—perhaps even wisely—he is more interested in legislation than in admonition.

So the scandals are ending in a standoff, and that is sobering to consider. In many places around the world today, there are democracies that are on the verge of collapsing, or are carrying out their constitutional provisions in only token ways. American democracy is a lot stronger. Yet the ever-increasing revelations about the foreign-policy megascandal of the Reagan and Bush Administrations show that even here, in democracy's homeland, constitutional rule is a struggle, not a given, and the struggle does not always go well. ♦

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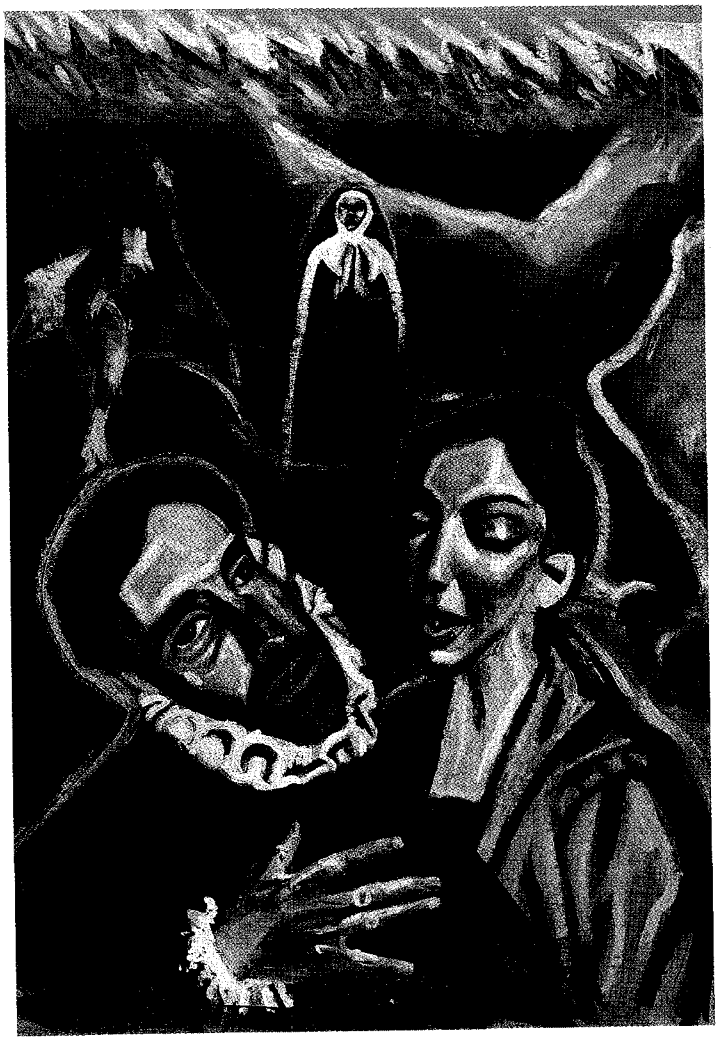
EVERYTHING exists in order to end as a book, according to Mallarmé. There was a period not long ago in our cultural life when it seemed as if everything existed in order to end as a Broadway musical. Now it seems as if everything that doesn't exist to become a made-for-TV movie ends up as a one-person show. Most of these shows center quite predictably around a character or a writer. Not, however, Roger Rosenblatt's new show, "Bibliomania," which takes on the omnibus subject of books.

"I'm affecting the persona of someone who grew up in a home full of books, someone who cherishes them," Mr. Rosenblatt says. (He himself has written five books.) "But I'm not going to be overly reverent about them. I'd say the show is seventy-five per cent funny and twenty-five per cent deeply serious." His topics will include the methods of a favorite literature teacher, the rise of the book superstore, the personality of the book borrower ("tending toward the disturbed"), and book-chat shows ("always funny, because they're so boring"). It would be nice to think that the impetus for these observations was an undiluted affection for the written word. But the author, who made the leap from desk to stage in 1991, in his first one-man show, "Free Speech in America," admits to another, writerly reason: "I wanted an excuse to get out of the house."



Daryl Henricksen and Selena Cantor in "El Greco."

ANDREA VENTURA

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information. . . . ¶ Note: At press time, labor negotiations involving the Broadway theatre musicians were in progress, so you would do well to telephone ahead to check the schedules of the Broadway musicals.)

The Bathtub—The Phoenix Ensemble presents a 1930 play by Vladimir Mayakovsky, translated from the Russian by Paul Schmidt. Previews through Sept. 25. Opens Sept. 26 at 7. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 388-8229.)

Bibliomania—A one-man show by Roger Rosenblatt. In previews. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

The Fiery Furnace—Julie Harris stars in a play by Timothy Mason, directed by Norman René. The cast also includes Susan Batten, William Fichtner, Ashley Gardner, and Zach Grenier. Presented by Circle Repertory Company. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

El Greco—An opera about the Spanish painter, with music by William Harper and a libretto by Bernardo Solano. Tom O'Horgan directed. Previews through Sept. 25. Opens Sept. 26 at 3 and runs through Oct. 17. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

In Persons—The actors Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson, married for forty-six years, celebrate their lives in the theatre. Martin Charnin was the director. In previews. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Madness of George III—Nigel Hawthorne stars in the Royal National Theatre's production of Alan Bennett's play. Nicholas Hytner directed. The two-week engagement begins previews on Sept. 28 and runs through Oct. 10. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette St. 1-718 636-4100.)

The Maids—Charles Busch stars in Jean Genet's 1947 play. In previews. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Sophistry—A play by Jonathan Marc Sherman, one of the participants in the 1988 Young Playwrights Festival. This new work concerns sexual harassment at a small college in New England and features Calista Flockhart, Ethan Hawke, Austin Pendleton, and Mr. Sherman himself. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Young Playwrights Festival—The winners of this year's Young Playwrights competition—all of whom were teen-agers at the time of their submissions—are Carter L. Bays, Kim Daniel, Madeleine George, Jerome D. Hairston, and Dyron Holmes. Four of the works, all one-acts, will be presented in fully staged productions, and one will be given a staged reading. Opens Sept. 22 at 8 and runs through Oct. 10. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. Not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

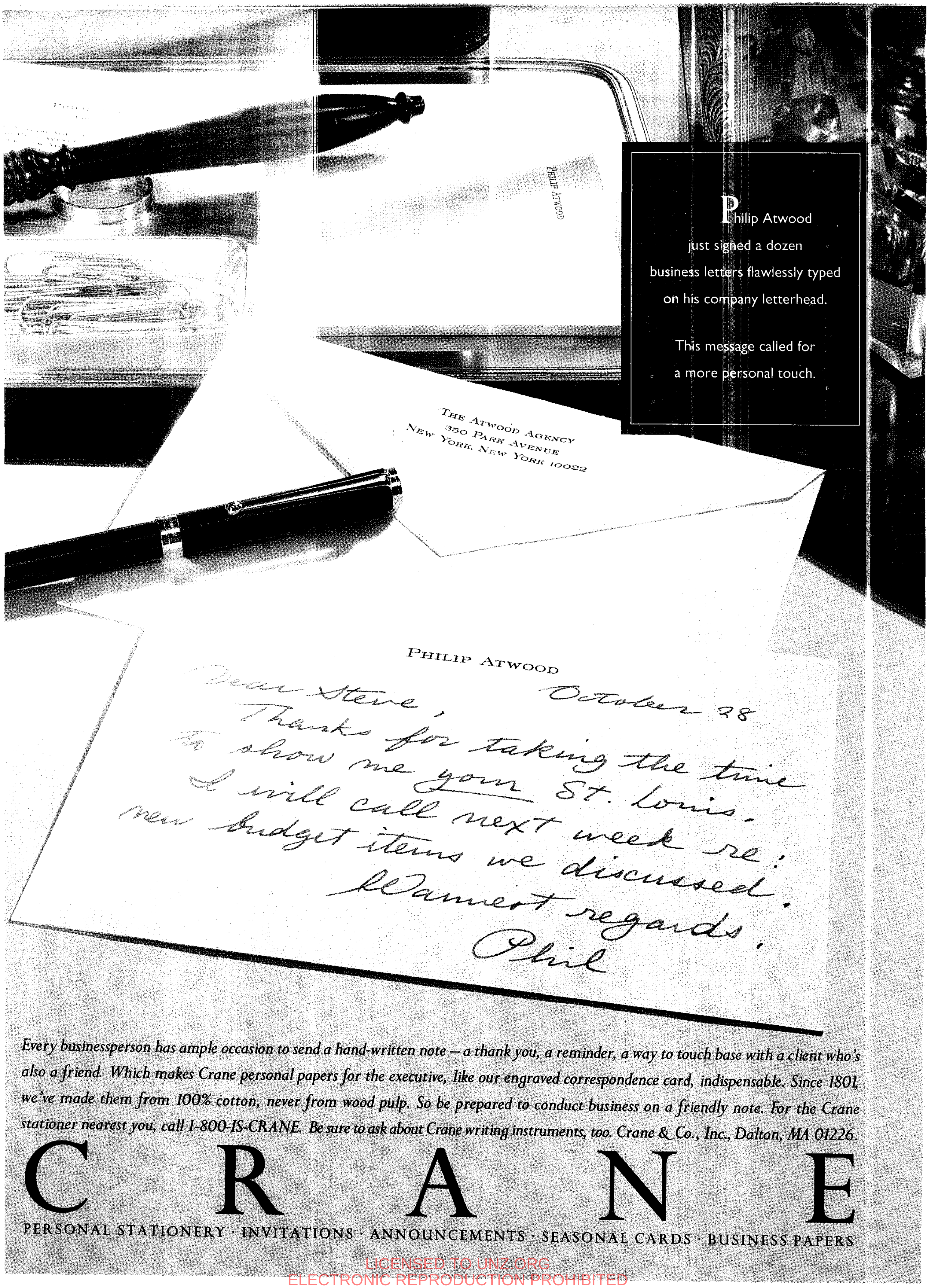
Annie Warbucks—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." After sixteen years, the old team—Thomas Meehan (book) and Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin (music and lyrics)—is still in top form. Donna McKechnie, Harve Presnell, Harvey Evans, Marguerite McIntyre, and Raymond Thorne—to say nothing of a merry scattering of orphans—give strong support. Choreography by Peter Gennaro, scenery by Ming Cho Lee, costumes by Theoni V. Aldredge, and lighting by Ken Billington. (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Black Comedy/White Liars—"Black Comedy" is an impeccable revival of Peter Shaffer's farce, in which dark becomes light and vice versa. This drawing-room comedy of the sixties is the apotheosis of the sight gag, with lines to match. Peter MacNicol plays the leading role, and he is given strong support by Nancy Marchand and Brian Murray. In "White Liars," the curtain-raiser, it is Miss Marchand who takes command, as a bogus baroness turned fortune-teller. John Lee Beatty designed the spectacular settings, and Gerald Gutierrez directed. (9/13/93) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Oct. 3.)

Blood Brothers—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. Willy Russell wrote book, music, and lyrics, to no avail. The cast includes Shaun and David Cassidy and Petula Clark. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—Claudia Shear's one-woman show about the sixty-five jobs, "from whorehouse to penthouse," she has held over the years. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

The Hamlet Festival—The festival's first cycle runs through Sept. 26. At Nada Inc., 167 Ludlow St.: "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke" (the second-quarto version of the play), directed by Randolph Curtis Rand. . . . Weekend cabaret performances of Arden Party's solo "Hamlet," Janice Hoffman's "Gertrude's Revenge," and Stuart

**P**hilip Atwood
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Sherman's "Hamlet (or Else What?)." . . ¶ At the House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St.: Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead." (For tickets to all events, call 420-1466.)

Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!—The sixteen original songs in this revue range from a wistful love note to Elizabeth Taylor Hilton Wilding Todd Fisher Burton Burton Warner Fortensky to a tribute to Private Banana by his fellow-soldiers ("the new recruit is a fruit") to "Blue Flame," a gutsy number sung by a moth. Mr. Crabtree and his collaborators are witty and topical, and the show is an exuberant delight. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera, in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. The cast also includes Anthony Crivello, as Valentin, and Jeff Hyslop, as Molina. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Later Life—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney. The scene is a cocktail party in Boston, where the couple are constantly interrupted by the other guests, who arrive two by two. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. The play was seen recently at Playwrights Horizons. (6/14/93) (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Oedipus the King—Timothy Wheeler is the troubled tyrant in the Pearl Theatre Company's production of Sophocles' play. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical moves to a bigger theatre starting Sept. 28. The cast is the same, with one exception: Diane Fratantoni has replaced Judy Kuhn. The other principals are Boyd Gaines, Sally Mayes, Howard McGillin, Jonathan Freeman, Brad Kane, Lee Wilkof, and Louis Zorich. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. With Michael Learned, Linda Lavin, Joanne Camp, and Hal Linden. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Three Hotels—This new play by Jon Robin Baitz is no more than a technical exercise, but what technique! Debra Monk and Ron Rifkin are superb as husband and wife; the versatile Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill, but director Des McAnuff's production is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma that no amount of slick, exhausting spectacle can resolve. The hero, that deaf, dumb, and blind kid, is spectacularly passive, and thus unreachable, unknowable, and essentially undramatic. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

New York Stories

In West African culture the "griot" is a storyteller, a tribal historian. In "Griot New York," a hundred-minute dance work, Garth Fagan has captured Manhattan. A collaboration with the artist and set designer Martin Puryear and the jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, "Griot New York" will be performed by Garth Fagan Dance at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts (October 9-10), with Marsalis's septet providing the accompaniment. Shortly thereafter, the Rochester-based company will move on to a season of repertory at the Joyce Theatre (November 16-28).

In making this dance about New York, Fagan discovered that he, too, is a griot. The Jamaican-born choreographer first visited New York as a young man, in 1958, and lived here as a student in the sixties. The qualities that impressed him initially—the city's "size, speed, and variety"—impress him still. "'Griot' celebrates immigrants," he says. Fagan's enthusiasm for performing here could land him a spot in a tourism commercial. "It is so fulfilling I can't believe it," he says. "And with Wynton down there in the pit, it's madness."

Twyla Tharp—An engagement in which Ms. Tharp demonstrates the working process with her dancers. Each program includes classics from her repertoire as well as a new dance phrase, which she will develop onstage. Adding a further note of naked verisimilitude, the performances are given without benefit of costumes or production components. Sept. 22 and Sept. 24-25 at 7:30: "Fever," "Sextet," a new dance phrase, "Nine Sinatra Songs," and "Baker's Dozen." . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 7:30 and Sept. 25 at 2: "Octet," an untitled work, a new dance phrase, and "In the Upper Room." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Elizabeth Streb/Ringside—The great red-brick arches of the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage have long since been walled up, but within its echoing reaches the choreographer Elizabeth Streb has found the perfect space for the finely calibrated rigors of her full-tilt, high-impact "equipment pieces": "Lookup," "Surface," "Freeflight," "Impact," and a number of "inter-actions," or brief movement bites. (Cadman Plaza West and Old Front St., Brooklyn. Sept. 22-25 at 8. For reservations, call 206-6674.)

Balé Teatro Castro Alves—A Brazilian dance company from Bahia. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 22-25 at 8 and Sept. 26 at 2 and 7:30.)

Polly Motley—A Boulder-based choreographer presents "Indigenous Culture." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 22-24 at 8.)

Korean Dance—Thirty-five classical Korean dancers and musicians perform as part of the Asia Society's festival of Korea. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 25 at 8 and Sept. 26 at 7:30.)

Mario Maya Flamenco Dance Company—The opening performance by a fifteen-member company from Seville. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 28 at 8. Through Oct. 3.)

Garth Fagan Dance—In "Griot New York," with music composed by Wynton Marsalis and performed live by his septet. As of press time, the company's City Center engagement, scheduled for Sept. 28-Oct. 1, was cancelled. The Brooklyn Center performances of "Griot" are scheduled for Oct. 9-10. (For information, call 1-718 951-4500.)

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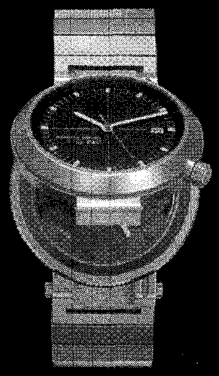

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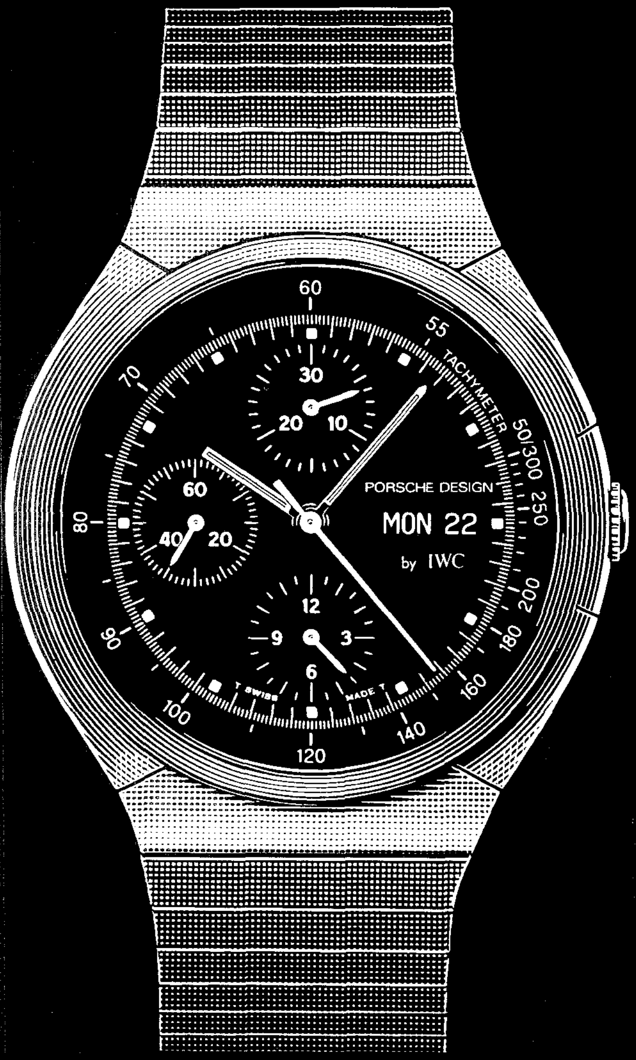

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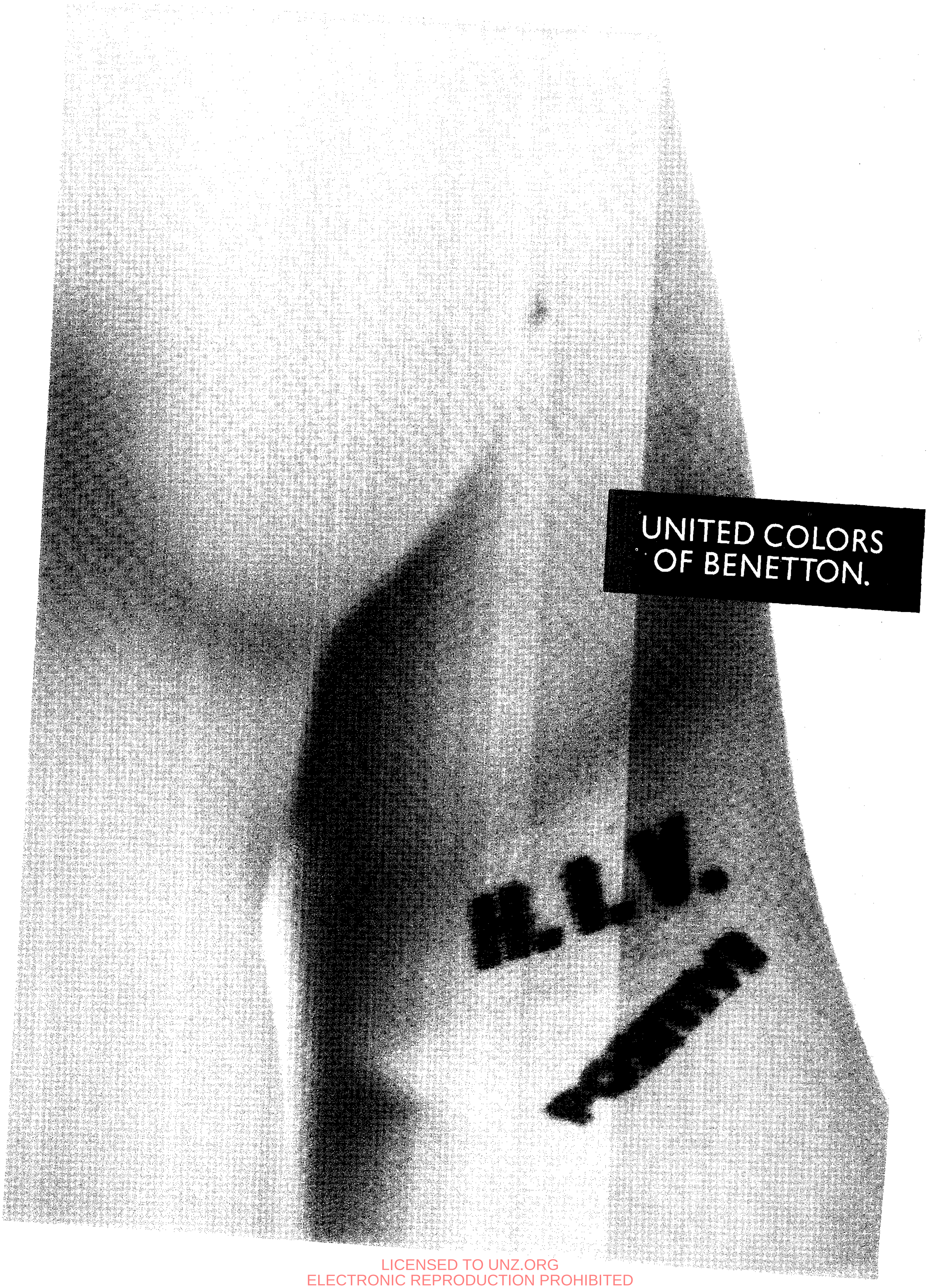
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NIGHT LIFE

Cheap Thrills

WHILE other alternative rockers rail against the evils of the music business, the Washington, D.C.-based punk band Fugazi puts its money where its mouth is. Since its genesis in the mid-eighties, when greed was still cool, this clean-living, vegetarian, drug-and-alcohol-free band has espoused anti-commercial ideals with a fervor that gives new meaning to the term "hardcore." For one thing, Fugazi has refused to parlay its indie-rock heroism (and substantial sales) into a major-label contract. Even more remarkable, the band releases its records on its own do-it-yourself label, Dischord, and sells CDs for ten dollars or less a pop. And Fugazi insists that concert promoters charge no more than five dollars for tickets to its shows. "We are not an entertainment machine," guitarist Guy Picciotto recently explained to the Washington *Post.* "Five bucks allows us to have a terrible show. Honestly, there are nights when the band is just not functioning, for whatever reason, but I don't feel like I've ripped anybody off, ever."

Picciotto may be too modest, since many critics regard Fugazi as the best American band most Americans have never heard of. Embracing punk's restless, confrontational spirit while rejecting its nihilism, these musicians—Picciotto and Ian MacKaye on guitar and vocals, Joe Lally on bass, and Brendan Canty on drums—play furious songs that are politically astute without being didactic. Likewise, Fugazi's lean, smart sound is at once provocative and catchy, in the tradition of punk-pop icons like the Clash and the Police. Fugazi's latest album, "In on the Kill Taker," emphasizes the driving, syncopated rhythms and canny tonal leaps that have made its music both lively and unsettling. Put a few dollars aside and see them at Roseland on September 24-25.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—"Peter Howard Celebrates Broadway," a tribute to a hundred years of musical comedy, featuring veteran performers **LEE ROY REAMS** and **JEANNE LEHMAN,** continues throughout the week. Vocalist Martin Tishman will be in for a night on Sept. 27. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. Several four-piece combos are featured this week: the Frank Wess quartet on Sept. 24-25, the David Coss quartet on Sept. 26, the Paul Meyers quartet on Sept. 27, and the Don Friedman quartet on Sept. 28. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. On Sept. 28, the Blue Note kicks off twelve weeks of big-name appearances commemorating the club's twelfth anniversary. **Lionel Hampton & the Golden Men of Jazz** get things going with a weeklong engagement. Hampton, the venerable bandleader and multi-instrumentalist, will also host a gala anniversary party and jam session on Sept. 30. In the weeks and months ahead, keep an eye out for Ray Charles, Dianne Reeves, Chaka Khan, Herbie Hancock, and others. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. On Sept. 23, FM-radio luminary Vin Scelsa serves up another installment of his series "In Their Own Words: A Bunch of Songwriters Sittin' Around Singing." Scelsa's brainchild has thus far brought Lou Reed, Richard Thompson, Rosanne Cash, and others of their ilk to the Bottom Line to sing and schmooze. This show's guests will include former Young Rascal **Felix Cavaliere** and rascally musical satirist **Mojo Nixon.**

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The art collection in this neighborhood restaurant, bar, and jazz club is a curator's nightmare. Fortunately, the musicians who gather round the Baldwin every night are usually more harmonious. Beginning Sept. 27: pianist **Mulgrew Miller.** Miller was part of the Betty Carter trio in the early eighties, before being tapped for the coveted piano seat in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. His latest album, "Hand in Hand," features an all-star/star-to-be quintet including vibraphonist **Steve Nelson,** who'll be appearing with Miller for this engagement. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have turned up and tuned up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. On Sept. 24-25: bluesy rock from **Adam Roth & the Blue Devils.** Formerly a member of the Del Fuegos, Roth used to run comedy workshops at Emerson College with Denis Leary and has played guitar for Leary's wry musical efforts, so expect plenty of witty patter between songs.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters and wraparound pastel murals. All this week: Broadway ingénue turned cabaret legend **Barbara Cook,** with her trusty accompanist **Wally Harper.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Ronny Whyte** presides at the piano.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. On Sept. 25: progressive pop from **Velocity Girl.**

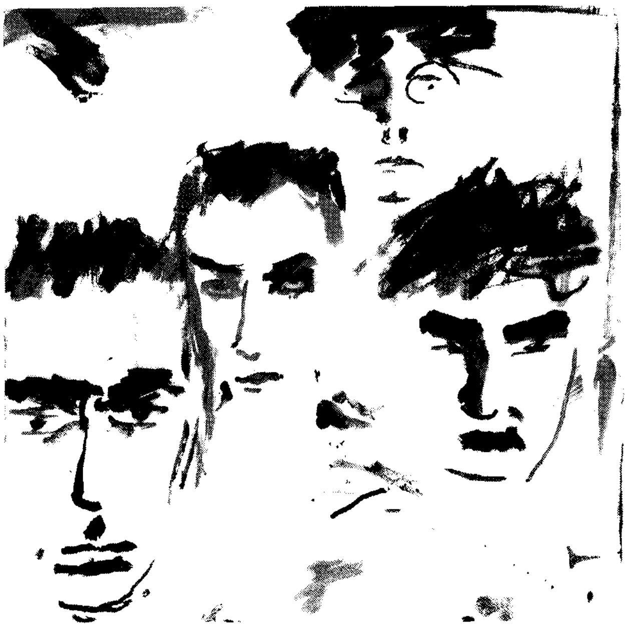
Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The **Scott Hamilton** quintet is in through Sept. 26. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul** leads a trio. Dining.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. But in spite of the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rocking. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall of speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. **Dramarama,** an electrifying power-pop band that emigrated from New Jersey to Los Angeles, will be back on the East Coast to play here on Sept. 22. **Red Kross** and **Slim Dunlap** will also appear. On Sept. 23: Mind Bomb, with Dandelion.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, bangers and mash, and a piano. While music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. On Sept. 22-25, the piano-and-sax team of **Judy Carmichael** and **Mike Hashim** will shake things up.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This modest space provides a forum for freethinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. This week, the club's monthlong nightly tribute to musician/composer/arranger/downtown prince **John Zorn** continues.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but the folkies, rockers, and other assorted types who turn up here come from all over. On Sept. 22: **John Sebastian and the J Band** will play some of Sebastian's old Lovin' Spoonful and Woodstock-era hits, along with some of the new material that appeared earlier this year on the singer's first album in seventeen years, "Tar Beach." Dining.



Fugazi at Roseland.

KAREN CALDICOTT

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drinks lend this blues bar a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: the long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. Guitarist **Johnny Allen,** whom CBS-TV hailed last year as the "fastest-rising blues star in New York," appears Sept. 22. Another fine guitar player, Chicago's **Maurice John Vaughn,** plays on Sept. 23. Sept. 28 is Tuesday, so it must be . . . Reggae Night, with guests Rising Lion.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On Sept. 22: **Richie Havens,** the man who took the mellow out of folk music, will play songs about love, justice, and (maybe) trains, in his churning, intensely personal style. On Sept. 25: **Mark Eitzel,** the lead singer of the fabulous rock band American Music Club, will pour his heart out in a rare solo performance. Mecca Normal will open for him.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. This week, **Mel Tormé** continues his not-to-be-missed engagement. In performance, the singer puts on display two great treasures: his own resilient, rhythmically agile voice and the collection of American songbook standards his voice caresses. Tormé believes in good old-fashioned entertainment, but shtick almost never intrudes on his act. The pipes are still intact, and so is his taste.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Intimate nineties glitter. On Sept. 28, **Lainie Kazan** begins her second engagement at the club. A singer and sometime movie actress known for her warm, earthy wit, Kazan is set to release her first album in fifteen years. Check her out live in the meantime. Closed Mondays.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—The vast floor here can accommodate ballroom dancing, and does so on Thursdays and Sundays. On other nights, Roseland becomes another dark, sweaty rock club, with flannel-clad stage divers holding forth. On Sept. 24-25: **Fugazi,** perhaps the most celebrated heroes of an unsung genre, contemporary hardcore.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. The band Som Brazil will oversee a Rio-style dance party on Sept. 25. On Sept. 27, salsa artist **Oscar Figueroa** will sing and play the congas. A "fall ska orgy" is scheduled for Sept. 28, with **Mephiskapheles** and other guests presiding over the naughty fun. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—With the opening of the Chestnut Room, this legendary tourist haven is making a bid to attract serious jazz fans. The club, which resembles a hunting lodge, is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings have been impressive. The **Illinois Jacquet** big band has checked in for a two-week gig. Dining.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **Mingus Big Band** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. On Sept. 23 **Roomful of Blues** is here for a night. Johnny Copeland takes over on Sept. 24.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. **Arthur Taylor's Wailers** continue through Sept. 26. There are exhilarating moments when a great jazz drummer can transform the air around the bandstand into molten rhythm. Taylor reaches those peaks with more regularity than practically anyone else. His Wailers are invariably youthful, straight-out-of-the-gate hard boppers, whose enthusiasm is kept in check by Taylor's stringent concern for form. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

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peace-espousing, environmentally correct literature displayed near the door, it's little wonder that this cavernous dive (situated right down the block from the entrance to the Holland Tunnel) has lured Deadheads and bands that share the Dead's penchant for endless jamming. That said, patrons in suits and ties can also be spotted swigging Rolling Rocks at the bar and taking in the various incarnations of rock, R. & B., and jazz featured on the small stage toward the back of the club. On Sept. 24: two Boston-based college-rock bands, the **BOGMEN** and **5-0.** More progressive music follows on Sept. 25, with Rockland County's **LAST TRIBE** and Jersey's the **OUTCRY.**

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **SONNY FORTUNE** (sax), **GEORGE CABLES** (piano), and **CECIL MC BEE** (bass) are in for a two-week run. Closed Sundays.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

No matter how many dry Martinis in long-stemmed glasses you've thrown back, an unfestooned, origamically ordered department store still looks like a department store. Consequently, at the opening of the uptown Barneys New York, the almost clinical austerity seemed at odds with the invitation's exhortation to "revel" and "jubilate." The reception that followed, at the Pierre Hotel, only amplified the cognitive dissonance. From Zen-like merchandising to drapery-drenched Camp Scheherazade—where were we going? Why would the up-to-the-nanosecond Pressman family take us backward?

But the revellers at the Pierre had no time to speculate. They were soon caught up déja-viewing Anthony Haden-Guest eavesdropping on Diane Brill and Stephen Saban; Bianca schmoozing Calvin, Ian, and Diane; and Fran Lebowitz grinding across the dance floor with Donna Karan. One sensed a collective omigod as guests looked around and simultaneously realized that the multinooked space could be taken for—Studio 54! If they're not dead, they've shown up! Barry White's rapturous set with the Love Unlimited Orchestra turned the seventies flashback into a full-blown hallucination. "Wouldn't it be great every week?" said a sweaty editor, with all her clothes askew. "To bring back Studio, when everyone was sexy?" "Bring back Studio," said a designer standing next to her, "when everyone spent money. Would that be wild? Isn't this crazy?"

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

RENO—The writer/comedian/performance artist is trying out new material in this engagement at P.S. 122. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Sept. 23-26 at 7:30.)

SCOTT HERON—Presenting "Diary of a Gym Queen," an evening of four solo story dances. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Sept. 23-26 at 9.)

ART

Full Circles

The decision to put together a show of Alexander Liberman's fresh-faced, half-forgotten "Circle Paintings," from the period 1949-61 (Gagosian, 980 Madison Avenue, at 76th Street; through October 2), reflects a rare combination of aesthetic perspicacity and cunning. Liberman is a respected artist, best known in recent decades for boldly abstract, monumental outdoor sculptures. He is perhaps even better known, and more influential, in his role as editorial director of Condé Nast Publications.

The "Circle Paintings" certainly seem timely, even fashionable. With their clear Constructivist geometries and their impersonal veneers, these paintings convey an aura as pristine as an icon by Mondrian or Malevich, and yet are as pragmatic as any mechanized "Rotogravure" by Duchamp. At the time these works were made, Liberman's cool compositional style and his artisanal approach to production constituted a break from Abstract Expressionist beliefs concerning process. (Some of his pieces were fabricated by others, outside his studio.) This lack of visible painterly emotion now seems to have been pointing the way toward work by younger contemporaries like Ellsworth Kelly and Robert Mangold, and all the way up to such current refiners of the abstract genres as Peter Halley and Philip Taaffe.

An exhilarating whiff of the pasteup-and-mechanicals room of a great fashion magazine hovers about this show—a quality that assumes a special significance in this period of Chanel-logo art and shopping-bag conceptualism. The punctuating dots in "After Image" (1955) are to the deciphering eye like beauty marks or eighteenth-century mouches, while the impudent little circles of "Gravitation" (1959) suggest the subversive schematics of a John Lindell.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Versailles 1973: American Fashion on the World Stage." The title of this exhibition refers to the unprecedented occasion when five American fashion designers were invited to join their French counterparts on the runway, evidently to resounding effect. The apparel on view here was chosen, however, not so much to document the Versailles epiphany as to evoke certain intrinsically "American" qualities in fashion: an egalitarian informality, a sportive streak, a utilitarian tendency toward men's styles for women, and day-into-night motifs, suggesting a vestigial puritanism. Clothes from very recent seasons are included, along with some hundred-year-old numbers, and while the curators' points are intelligently made, the show is a little low on brio. Only Norman Norell seems to hold a candle to the European masters when it comes to subtlety of tailoring or construction; and a good assortment of body-conscious designs from the seventies by Stephen Bur-

Ceramics by Otto and Gertrud Natzler at the American Craft Museum.

SID ADAMS/PHOTO COURTESY OF L.A. TIMES

rows and Halston provide the only real excitement. . . . ¶ The museum's new Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture galleries are now open, featuring, among other works, van Gogh's "Wheat Field with Cypresses" (recently purchased for a cool fifty-seven million and then given to the Met). (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The roof garden, featuring six large sculptures, a great view, and cappuccino, is open when weather permits.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A four-decade retrospective of the work of Robert Ryman, a minimalist best known for his elegant, entirely white paintings. Opens Sept. 26. . . . ¶ "Multiple Images: Photographs since 1965 from the Collection" features work by Jan Groover, Sol LeWitt, Duane Michals, and Charles Ray. Through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ A "sculptural video" installation by John Sturgeon. . . . ¶ "Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper: Selections from the Design Collection." Twenty objects, including televisions, appliances, and chairs, all designed between 1959 and 1978. . . . ¶ Fifteen large-scale linoleum-block prints by Chuck Close of his friend and fellow-artist Alex Katz. Through Sept. 28. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursday and Friday evenings until 8:30, with no admission charge after 5:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum presents Rebecca Horn, a German artist whose work incorporates all manner of objects, from feathers to pistols to mercury—everything except old-fashioned paint and canvas. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—More than seventy paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940). Through Oct. 31. . . . ¶ "Singular Dimensions in Painting," an exhibit of minimalist work, primarily from the fifties and sixties. . . . ¶ A site-specific installation by Rebecca Horn. Through Oct. 1. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A thirty-year retrospective featuring more than fifty paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings by Vija Celmins: deceptively simple monochromatic seascapes, evening skies, and lunar surfaces. . . . ¶ "Hand-Painted Pop" includes early works by Rauschenberg, Johns, Warhol, and Rosenquist, and by such less well known artists as Jean Follett and Jess. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ "In the Spirit of Fluxus," a carefully thought-out and handsomely installed exhibition of art and incunabula by the far-flung practitioners of this international neo-Dada non-movement. Through Oct. 3. . . . ¶ "Hopper in Paris" consists of twenty-five works that Hopper painted in the early nineteen-hundreds. Through Oct. 3. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Cuba, as seen in photographs, drawings, and biological specimens, including the skull of a previously unknown species of monkey. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Fancy Feet: Four Centuries of Ladies' Footwear." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—Organized as part of an ongoing Master Artist series, "Gertrud and Otto Natzler: Collaborations/Solitude" showcases the elegant contributions to twentieth-century ceramics of this husband-and-wife team. Through Oct. 10. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office" examines the traditional link between "women's work" and home and office appliances. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

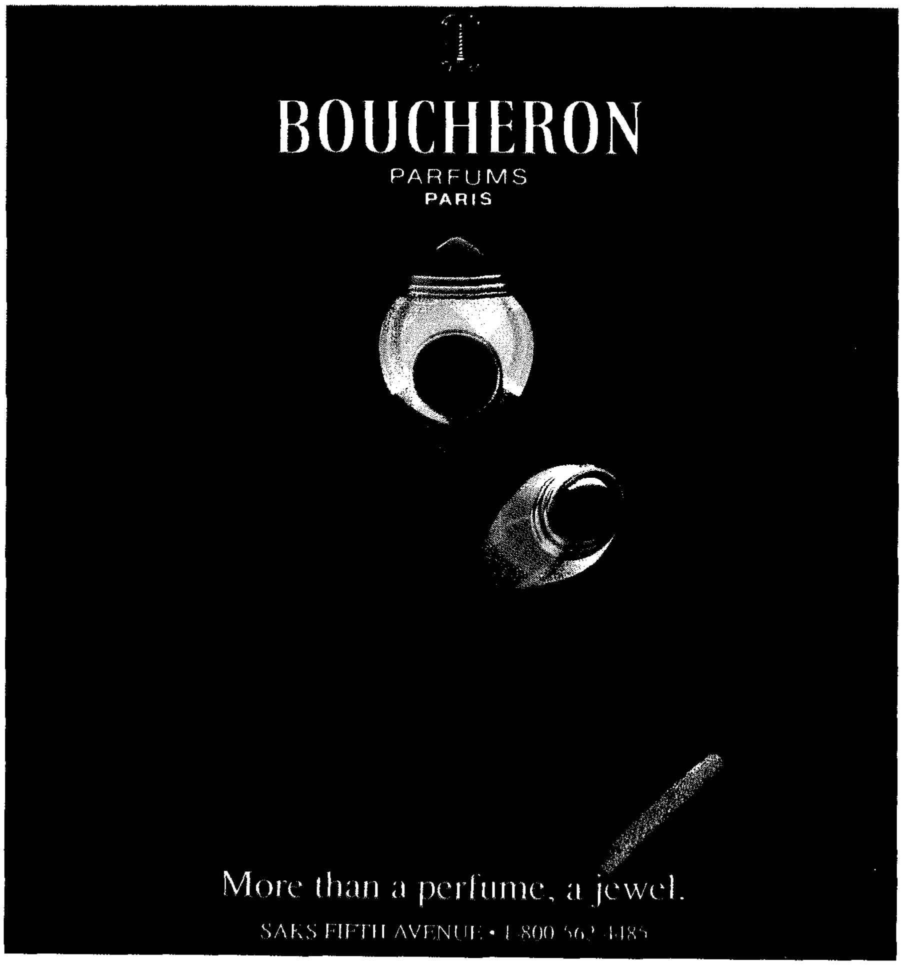
JEWISH MUSEUM, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St.—"From the Inside Out" showcases eight contemporary international artists, including Christian Boltanski and Nancy Spero. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibition of five centuries' worth of French drawings and prints, from Jacquemart de Hesdin to Gauguin. . . . ¶ The library celebrates the birthdays of two classics: Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" and Beatrix Potter's "Peter Rabbit." On view are early manuscripts, various editions, photographs, illustrations, and other memorabilia. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

MUSEUM FOR AFRICAN ART, 593 Broadway—"Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas" examines various forms of the altar in African civilization, from Bahia to the Bronx. The exhibit will include reconstructed historical altars, altars from South America and the Caribbean, and specially commissioned altars by contemporary artists. Opens Sept. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway—"Trade Routes" showcases nineteen artists whose work explores the globalization of trade and culture. . . . ¶ "Testimonio," a collaborative installation by and about Latin Americans living in New York, includes mural paintings, works on paper, and photographs. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM, 144 W. 125th St.—The museum celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary with an exhibition of new work and recent acquisitions. Artists include Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, and Alvin Loving. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)



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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

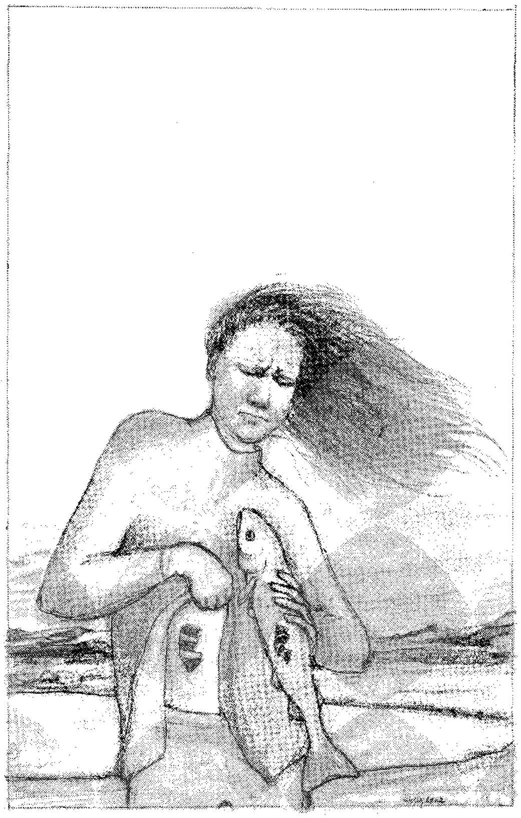
(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with shows opening this week.)

Bruce Conner—This influential artist, who emerged from San Francisco's Beat culture, is represented by assemblages and collages, dating from 1959 to 1964, made of discarded material ("primitive urban art," as he calls it). Opens Sept. 22. Through Oct. 30. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"Picturing History: American Painting, 1770-1930"—Ninety paintings of American historical scenes by American artists, among them George Bellows, Winslow Homer, and Robert W. Weir. Opens Sept. 28. Through Nov. 27. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, 590 Madison Ave., at 56th St.)

●

Asger Jorn (1914-73) / **Friedel Dzubas**—Entering a room full of paintings and collages by the Danish artist Asger Jorn, one has the impression of colorful and messy abstraction, yet figuration lurks beneath the cake-like surfaces—skulls, masks, and grotesques betraying the artist's gloomy Nordic roots. Jorn was a founder of Cobra (an acronym for Copenhagen Brussels Amsterdam), a loose association of artists and poets whose work often addressed the ravages of the Second World War. A decade later, he was a driving force behind the Situationists International, and his art reflects its anarchic politics. Jorn was markedly influenced by the Northern tradition of Munch, Ensor, and the German Expressionists, but he continually drew inspiration from the School of Paris. The presence of Miró is particularly strong, as in "Feast of the Imps" (1970), where Jorn renders a surreal biomorphic form reminiscent of the Spanish master, but utilizes the coarse brushwork and thick impasto characteristic of Expressionism. / Upstairs, there is a small show of color-field paintings by Friedel Dzubas, spanning fourteen years of his career (1976-90). Dzubas's lovely paintings lack the schematism of works by Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis but recall the evanescence of Helen Frankenthaler's landmark "Mountains and Sea." Through Sept. 25. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)



Self-portrait by Holly Lane (Schmidt-Bingham).

Holly Lane—Lane is a young California artist with a taste for weighty art-historical references. She paints obscure personal narratives in a precise yet dreamy maner. A woman resembling the artist drifts through many of these paintings, her demeanor otherworldly. But frames are the showstopper here: heavy ornamental encasements suggesting quattrocento or early Netherlandish altarpieces. Through Oct. 9. (Schmidt-Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.

Hannelore Baron (1926-87)—Collages and box constructions incorporating found materials, made between 1970 and 1987. Through Oct. 16. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

Michael Bergt—Most of the twenty-eight works in this show are small-scale, and many are executed in softly incandescent egg tempera, which proves a perfect medium for this artist's delicate wit. (There are a few sculptures, too, including a perpetually nodding bronze head called "Yes Man.") Art history is Bergt's playground, and puns abound. References include Giotto, Bosch, and Botticelli. Surrealism is represented, too: "Bungee," showing a figure in a suit and tie, dangling upside down from a bungee cord, could almost be mistaken for a Magritte. Through Oct. 9. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Fernando Botero—Sculpture and drawings on canvas. Through Nov. 6. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . **NOTE:** Botero's corpulent bronze figures can be seen on Park Avenue from 54th to 61st Sts. Through Nov. 14.

Willem de Kooning / Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985)—A show juxtaposing the late works of both artists: de Kooning's ribbon paintings and Dubuffet's less well known linear paintings. Through Oct. 16. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Louise Fishman—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 9. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Andy Goldsworthy—Recent works by this English conceptual artist and nature-walker, including a number of rather conventional text-and-photo pieces on naturalist themes and two beautiful, labor-intensive site-specific installations—one a sort of wall drawing, the other a room-divider screen—made entirely of found organic objects such as leaves and twigs and thorns. The screen, in particular, is a tour de force. Through Oct. 16. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Robert Kulicke—Kulicke, who is known for his still-lifes, is as concerned with what supports a painting as with the painting itself. The exhibition includes twenty-five precise replicas of twelfth- to seventeenth-century frames. And, in order not to upstage the frames, he has used mirrors in place of paintings. Through Oct. 9. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Grégoire Müller—Recent portraits by this Swiss artist. Through Oct. 30. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Gerhard Richter—The first show of paintings in three years by this German artist, who continues his investigation of the abstract. (There is also, surprisingly, one realistic floral work.) Through Oct. 23. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Peter Saul—A mini-retrospective that ranges from the "Electric Chair" paintings of the sixties to a current Pop series. Through Oct. 16. (Frumkin/Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Anthony Viti—Paintings reflecting gay concerns, incorporating a cruciform motif from a Marsden Hartley painting. Through Oct. 2. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Jamie Wyeth—"Islands." Paintings from the past thirty years of Monhegan Island and of Southern Island, where the artist is the sole resident. Through Oct. 9. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

"Art and Politics in Weimar Germany"—Another of the gallery's probing exhibitions, this one consisting of watercolors, drawings, and prints by Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, and many others. Through Nov. 6. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Plane Truths"—Works exploring the picture plane, be it a tondo by Ilya Bolotowsky, a sculpture-painting (a canvas placed on four legs) by James Hyde, or a painting by Burgoyne Diller in which the canvas is conceived in horizontal and vertical divisions. Through Oct. 8. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Richard Kalina—New paintings, some in which the artist is continuing his use of the grid and collage, others in which he has dropped the grid for biomorphic forms. Opens Sept. 23. Through Oct. 30. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Robert Morris—A double exhibition: Four large-scale sculptures, made in California in 1991, of precariously balanced industrial I-beams, described by the gallery as *very* minimal. Opens Sept. 25. Through Oct. 23. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.) . . . ¶ The fourth in a series of "blind-time" drawings, for which the artist, blindfolded, rubbed graphite onto paper and documented the process at the bottom of each work. Opens Sept. 25. Through Oct. 23. (Castelli, 578 Broadway.)

●

Carl Andre—Poems that are not unrelated to his minimalist sculptures: e.g., "dead brown owl/ dead brown owl/on the gravel/on the road/at the pit/at the meadows/dead brown girl brown/wing under head, lounging." Through Oct. 8. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Helene Brandt—Architectonic steel sculptures of evolutionary forms. Through Oct. 16. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

Alexander Calder (1898-1976)—Two monumental sculptures: a mobile from 1957 and a stabile from 1964, neither exhibited in New York before. Through Oct. 30. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Viola Frey—Unimaginably large ceramic figures—you have to wonder, How are they *fired*? There are also two groups of smaller figures and animals crowded together incongruously on pedestals, and a twenty-five-foot-long tile wall, which, though it is a technical marvel, is pale in comparison. Through Oct. 20. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Richard Hawkins/Raymond Pettibon—Loosely taped collages combining magazine-ad images and Post-its with handwritten words ("jealous pain," "suffering," etc.). / Composite drawings with both abstract and figurative elements, made of sections of other drawings by the artist. Through Oct. 9. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

William Hawkins (1895-1990)—Paintings by a self-taught artist. Through Oct. 25. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid—A series of paintings about a fictional suicide in a New Jersey motel room, and a number of proposals in the form of maquettes for the reuse of totalitarian monuments in the former U.S.S.R. Through Oct. 16. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Jonathan Lasker—Recent large-scale works with contrasting surfaces and thickly painted marks. Through Oct. 23. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Kathy Muehlemann—Grisaille paintings with scarified surfaces. Through Oct. 13. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Peter Nadin—Striking paintings enlivened by the febrile intensity of Nadin's brushwork and the dreamy melancholy of his images. Through Oct. 9. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Dona Nelson—Paintings from the past three years, which have the aura of dreams or reveries. Through Oct. 23. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Louise Nevelson (1900-88)—The artist's last metal assemblage sculpture. Through Oct. 16. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Nam June Paik—Prints and multiple video works from the past ten years. Through Oct. 23. (Sigma, 379 West Broadway.)

Alexis Rockman—Rockman's new cycle of paintings has as its theme the fate of Earth's species—animal and botanical—as they are carried off toward Saturn in a transparent spaceship-biosphere. Through Oct. 9. (Gorney, 100 Greene Street.)

Hunt Slonem—Slonem lives in a loft in Lower Manhattan with dozens of exotic birds, which he paints in something of a still-life vein. Here are twenty new works on his favorite subject. Through Oct. 2. (Helander, 594 Broadway.)

Andrew Spence—Bold abstract paintings in luminous colors. Through Oct. 16. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Joan Witek—Witek has been probing the complexities of black for twenty years, and her latest paintings (on canvas and Masonite, applied with rag) and watercolors (on paper, applied with brush) are deeply absorbing. The paintings are characterized by a center rectangle or square of white and black (a mini-abstract in itself), vibrating horizontal white lines, and a sensuous texture. The watercolors are evocations of the artist's concern with "control and accident." Through Oct. 16. (Cevern, 304 Mulberry St. Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Robert Yarber—Yarber seems to be drawn to the effects of natural and artificial light merging over resort-moderne buildings and suburban landscapes. In some of his best new paintings, Yarber's cool eye is trained upon Italian venues. Through Oct. 9. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

"Gone Beyond Gone"—Three new installations by Les Levine, Osvaldo Romberg, and Nancy Spero in collaboration with Abe Frajndlich. The curator feels they are "going in different directions with completely different stylistic approaches." Through Oct. 23. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Staged Moment

A print of Robert Doisneau's famous 1950 photograph, "The Kiss at the Hôtel de Ville," is included in a sizable retrospective of his work at Witkin (415 West Broadway; through October 23). As this show demonstrates, Doisneau has a superb sense of narrative and much of his work, which includes many Paris scenes, has a kind of pure wit. Some of his pictures of children are especially lyrical. But the charm of this photographer's work is not the news here.

"The Kiss," which depicts two lovers in a seemingly impulsive embrace on a crowded Paris sidewalk, was the subject of a small scandal earlier this year, when Doisneau was sued by several people who claimed that they appeared in the photograph and wanted a share of the royalties. *Life*, which first published the picture, had described it as "unposed," but in the course of the litigation it emerged that "The Kiss" was the result of a professional session, and that the lovers were paid models. Doisneau had never denied that he used models in some of his scenes—his working methods were thoroughly described last year in a catalogue that accompanied a retrospective at Oxford University's Museum of Modern Art—but part of what gave his work such wide appeal was that it was assumed to be documentary. In a way, his reputation benefitted from popular conceptions about how photography represents truth, or at least "the decisive moment" of spontaneous discovery. Now, when it's clear that some percentage of Doisneau's work must be judged as a form of "setup," or re-creation, will viewers be disappointed? Will Doisneau pay a price because of what his audience has learned about the complicated ways that images are achieved?

Eugène Druet (1868-1916)—Photographs taken between 1900 and 1916 of the sculptor Auguste Rodin. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

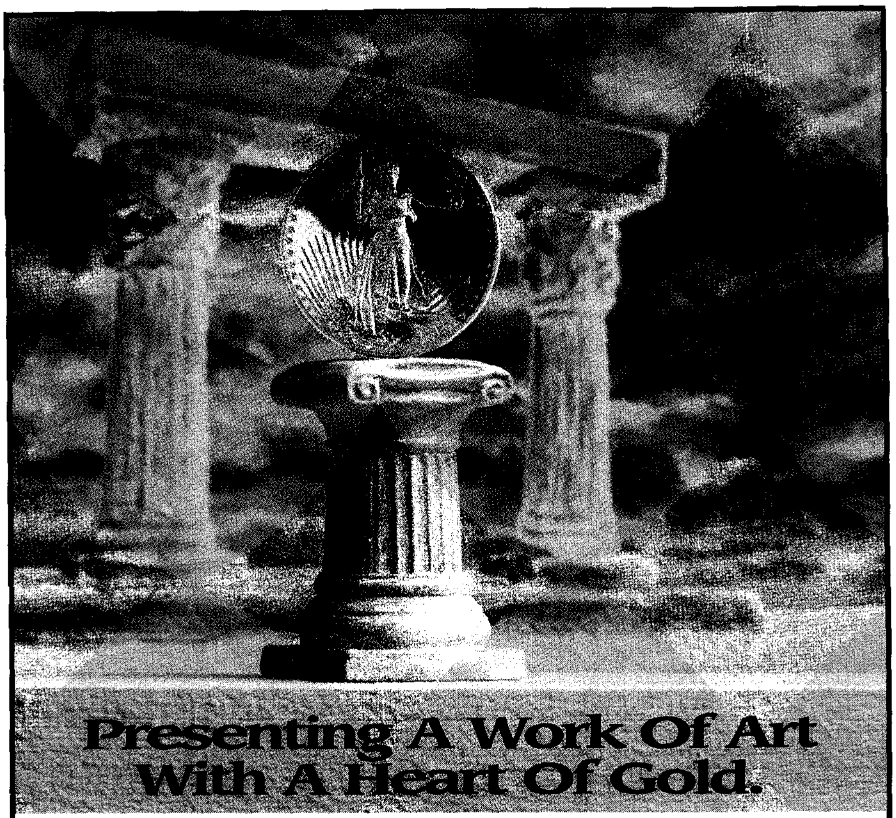
Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940)—Hine is best known for his harsh realist photography, particularly his work documenting Ellis Island, child labor, industrial squalor, and the construction of the Empire State Building. Through Nov. 13. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

Eikoh Hosoe—Work by one of Japan's most distinguished photographers. Through Oct. 16. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

George Platt Lynes (1907-55)—A first-rate exhibition of vintage photographs from the archives of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction, by this successful fashion, dance, and portrait photographer. Through Oct. 30. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl.)

Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946)—Photographs from the collection of Georgia O'Keeffe. Through Oct. 23. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History, and the New York Public Library.)



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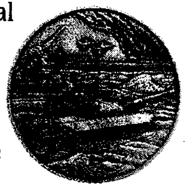

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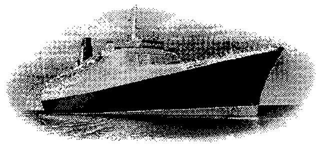

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44A

MUSIC

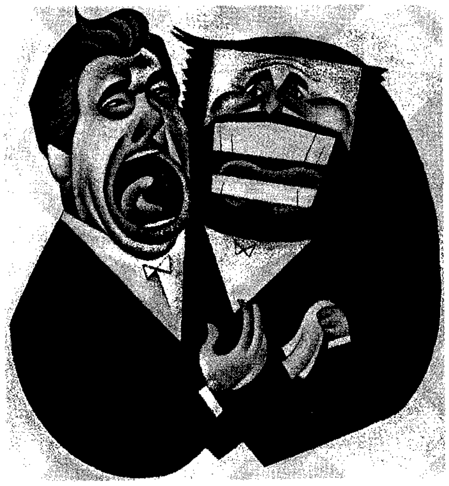
Going the Distance

EVERY symphonist since Beethoven has had to be conscious of laboring in a shadow. Most earlier specialists in the genre composed far more than he, but a striking number of those who came after (Schumann, Brahms, Tchaikovsky) stopped shy of his nine completed essays or, even more alarmingly, stumbled or died over a ninth (Bruckner, Mahler). One composer who laid the ghost to rest was Dmitri Shostakovich: his Ninth Symphony is a merry, almost flippant piece (to the intense annoyance of Stalin, who expected a grand statement). He lived to compose right up to No. 15, a beautifully enigmatic work casting stray glances back to Rossini and Wagner. Each of his symphonies has its own character and color; many have programmatic associations, some political and disputed. It's a rich cycle.

Among Shostakovich's influences, Beethoven's is not the first name that leaps to mind, but he was always in the background. Kurt Masur's newly announced plan to reëxamine the Beethoven and Shostakovich cycles in tandem at the New York Philharmonic should cast fresh light on both of them. The initial installment comes early in this season's subscription concerts, beginning on September 23, with the First Symphony of each composer.

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Opening performances of the season. Sept. 27 at 6:30: To celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Placido Domingo's and Luciano Pavarotti's Met débuts, both tenors will appear in an evening of single acts from three operas: Act I of "Die Walküre," with Waltraud Meier, Mr. Domingo, and Hans Sotin; Act I of "Otello," with Kallen Esperian, Mr. Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; and Act III of "Il Trovatore," with Ms. Esperian, Dolora Zajick, Vladimir Chernov, Paul Plishka, and—as the titular troubadour—a tenor (or could it perhaps be a couple of tenors?) whom the company prefers not to identify in advance. James Levine conducts throughout. . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 8: "Madama Butterfly," with Yoko Watanabe, Wendy White, Richard Leech, and Lucio Gallo; conducted by Christian Badea. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)



Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti at the Metropolitan Opera.

LEE EDWARD WOLFE

New York City Opera—**THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE**, by Michael Tippett; conducted by Christopher Keene. (Sept. 22 at 8.) . . . **TURANDOT**, conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 25 at 1:30 and Sept. 28 at 8.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**, conducted by Mr. Keene. (Sept. 25 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN**, conducted by Mr. Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 26 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "Madama Butterfly." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 25 at 7:30 and Sept. 26 at 2:30. Through Oct. 10.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts the opening concerts of the season. Sept. 22 at 8: Beethoven's "Fidelio" overture and Violin Concerto (with Itzhak Perlman) as well as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 1. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 8, Sept. 24 at 11 A.M., and Sept. 28 at 7:30: Beethoven's "Fidelio" Overture and Symphony No. 1, as well as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 1. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clark conducts David Amram's Violin Concerto (featuring Charles Castleman) and Dominick Argento's "A Waterbird Talk" (with tenor Vern Sutton). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sept. 22 at 8.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Carnegie Hall opens its season by presenting "those fabulous Philadelphians" with their new music director, Wolfgang Sawallisch, who will perform Ned Rorem's "Eagles" (an orchestral work from 1959 based on a poem by Whitman), Sibelius's Violin Concerto (featuring Midori), and Brahms' Symphony No. 2. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 23 at 7:30. A benefit concert, which, at the time of going to press, was threatened by a possible strike; confirm your plans accordingly.)

Manhattan School of Music Chamber Winds—Stephen Burns conducts works for wind ensemble by Stravinsky (his Octet), Varèse (his "Octandre"), Dvořák (his Serenade for Winds), and others. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Sept. 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

American Symphony Orchestra—On a graph depicting the nearly four centuries of ups and downs in the reputation of William Shakespeare, the nineteenth century would correspond to a plateau of extremely high altitude. His status as Romantic icon was felt not only among those inclined to drama but also in nineteenth-century musical circles. Berlioz idolized and married a Shakespearean actress (British, no less), Mendelssohn wrote his ever-popular "Midsummer Night's Dream" score for a German production of the play, Verdi spent a career flirting with Shakespearean plots before taking the plunge (with "Otello" and "Falstaff") in his extreme old age. These are obvious examples; others abound, and several will be found among the musical Shakespeareana that Leon Botstein will conduct on this program. On the playbill: Dvořák's "Othello Overture," John Knowles Paine's symphonic poem "The Tempest," Tchaikovsky's fantasy overture "Hamlet," and Strauss's symphonic poem "Macbeth." Appropriate bardic passages, delivered by the actress Claire Bloom, will pepper the proceedings. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Sept. 26 at 3.)

RECITALS

Four Nations Ensemble—The period-instrument trio's cellist, Loretta O'Sullivan, comes to the fore in sonatas by Vivaldi, François Francoeur, and Beethoven (his First). The Beethoven sonata was premièred in 1796, in Berlin, with the composer himself at the keyboard and Jean-Louis Duport handling the cello part. The principal member of the audience on that occasion was another cellist—Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia, the work's dedicatee and Duport's employer. His Majesty would doubtless have worked his way through the two Duport cello études that Ms. O'Sullivan will offer on this program, which will be rounded out by a magical moment from the second book of Couperin's Pièces de Clavecin (featuring harpsichordist Andrew Appel). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Sept. 22 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Ik-Hwan Bae and pianist Christopher O'Riley perform Brahms' D-Minor Violin Sonata; violist Paul Neubauer and cellist Christopher Costanza join them for a pair of piano quartets in G Minor, one by Mozart, the other by Brahms. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 23 at 7:30 and Sept. 26 at 4.)

Anonymous 4—The women's vocal quartet (which has just released "On Yoolis Night," a new disk of very old Christmas music; its recording of a fourteenth-century English ladymass continues to triumph on the crossover charts) offers a program of motets on themes of chivalry and romance, all taken from the Montpellier Codex, a massive repository of late-thirteenth-century French polyphony. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Sept. 23 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert, which is a benefit.)

Linda Wetherill—Flutist, performing works by C. P. E. Bach, Barber, and Copland, in addition to recent pieces by Kent Kennan and Cristóbal Halffter; with pianist Alan Moverman. (Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, 28 E. 20th St. Sept. 25 at 2. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Gryphon & Co.—An early-music trio performs folk music from Merrie Olde England. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., the Bronx. Sept. 26 at 11:30 A.M. No tickets necessary, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Joseph de Pasquale—The violist will perform a romance by Bruch, a sonata by Rochberg, and a theme and variations by Alan Shulman; with pianist Angelin Chang. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Sept. 26 at 1:30. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.) . . . **NOTE:** The recital, which is on the brief side, will be followed by a conversation with Mr. de Pasquale, an address by violinist Joseph Fuchs, and other business of the New York Viola Society, which is sponsoring the event.

Maxim Vengerov—In his New York début recital, the violinist will perform sonatas by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 378), Brahms (his Second), and Prokofiev (his First), among other works; with pianist Itamar Golan. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Sept. 26 at 3.)

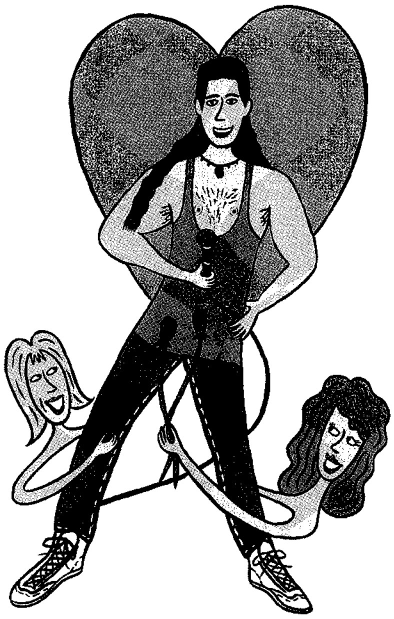
The King's Noyse—A vocal and instrumental early-music group, spotlighting seventeenth-century German music for violin band. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Sept. 26 at 5.)

Brentano String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn and Mendelssohn, in a salon setting. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 26 at 6. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 876-6000.)

Dorian Wind Quintet—The ensemble embarks on its thirty-second season with a change in personnel, welcoming Nancy Billmann as its hornist. They'll play music by Antonin Reicha, George Perle, Joan Tower (her "Island Prelude"), and Ravel; with harpist Deborah Hoffman. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Sept. 26 at 7.)

Works by Guy Klucevsek—The New York premières of two pieces by the composer and accordionist. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 27 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES



Billy Ray Cyrus at Nassau Coliseum.

JULIE WILSON

Billy Ray Cyrus—This Kentucky hunk's second record, the defensively titled "It Won't Be the Last," is a stolid country-rock effort whose musical style comes across as a pleasant amalgam of Elton John and Waylon Jennings, if you can believe it. Sadly, to judge by this album, we may never see the likes of a song like "Achy Breaky Heart" again; Cyrus's evident desire to be more than a novelty stud will probably deprive us of that pleasure. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Sept. 26 at 7:30.)

Grateful Dead—In another mind-melting evening of music to tie-dye for, the long, strange trip continues. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 22 at 7:30.)

Terence Blanchard and Roy Hargrove—For all the talk of a jazz renaissance, one disquieting factor remains: in the ten or so years that a new crop of knock-'em-dead players began swarming the earth, not one of them has made a sustained effort to become a serious, distinctive composer. In granting Terence Blanchard and Roy Hargrove commissions to write long-form works, Lincoln Center is taking a calculated risk. Both men are spectacular trumpeters and promising bandleaders, but neither has yet to write a melody that could sidle up to posterity. For Blanchard, who has recently been investigating extended forms, the event could affirm his nascent maturity; for the twenty-three-year-old Hargrove, it might reveal the man inside the wonder boy. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 22 at 8.)

Rod Stewart—Recently, with the help of MTV, Rod's fans tuned in, turned on, and got unplugged versions of his great early material. Acoustically rejuvenated by the gig, the raspy-voiced crooner seems wide-awake and ready to rock for the first time in years. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Sept. 22-23 at 8.)

Bette Midler—The giddy trash talk dips low, the singer's blockbuster voice hits musical highs, and jokes about Joey Buttafuoco and breaking wind collide with "Wind Beneath My Wings," "Delta Dawn," and other boffo songs. It's all too fabulous, as Bette will be the first to tell you, and it's not to be missed. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Sept. 22-23, Sept. 25-26, and Sept. 28, all at 8. Through Oct. 23.)

James Taylor—Midlife agrees with Sweet Baby James, and he has celebrated his artistic contentment with a wonderful new live album. Still, there ain't nothing like the real thing, so come on down. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 22-23, both benefit concerts, and Sept. 26-27, all at 8.)

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FRATELLI ROSSETTI

The Music of Jimmy Webb—This effulgent songwriter wrote some of the signature tunes of the sixties: "Wichita Lineman," "Up, Up and Away," "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," and that oddest of all symphonically excessive ditties, "MacArthur Park." Like many another comet of that decade, he hasn't burned as brightly since, but he still has a sly way with lyrics, and his new album, "Suspending Disbelief," has occasional lovely moments. Nanci Griffith, Michael Feinstein, David Crosby, Glen Campbell, and other admiring interpreters will be on hand to celebrate Webb's accomplishments. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Sept. 27 at 8.)

Marc Cohn—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sept. 23 at 8.

American Jazz Philharmonic—Conducted by Jack Elliott; with guest soloists Arturo Sandoval and Bob Berg. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Sept. 24 at 12:15 P.M. No tickets necessary.)

Halau O Kekuhi—A troupe of singers and dancers, led by the sisters Nalani and Pualani Kanaka'ole, performs sacred Hawaiian hula works. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Sept. 25 at 9. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

Depeche Mode—With the The. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 23-24 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. Sept. 25 at 7:30.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Montreal Expos, Sept. 24 at 7:40, Sept. 25 at 7:10, and Sept. 26 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, Sept. 27-28 at 7:40.

Yankees—Vs. the Minnesota Twins, Sept. 22 at 7:30.

Giants—Away until Oct. 17, when they'll face the Philadelphia Eagles.

Jets—Vs. the New England Patriots, Sept. 26 at 8.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; and the Jets and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

World Dance Party—The Brooklyn Ethnic Music and Dance Festival will kick off Prospect Park's new performing-arts series on Sept. 26, with a potpourri of traditional music and dance. A trio from Yemen, Epirote Greek musicians, a klezmer trio, a salsa band, and a gospel singer are among those who will perform, from noon to 8. From noon to 2:45, for a nominal fee, visitors can participate in dance workshops—Balkan, Irish, and mambo—and then try out their new steps at a dance party, from 3:30 to 8. (Prospect Park Picnic House, Long Meadow. Enter from Prospect Park W., between 4th and 5th Sts.)

China Moon—Amy Harlib, also known by her Chinese name, He An-mei, will present an afternoon of sword dancing, acrobatics, songs, and stories centered around the harvest season in China, when the full moon is at its brightest. (Abigail Adams Smith Museum, 421 E. 61st St. Sept. 26 at 2. No charge beyond museum admission.)

A Quarter Century of Black Art—The Studio Museum in Harlem will celebrate its twenty-fifth birthday with a performance by the percussion group Spirit Ensemble, films about African and Jamaican folktales, and mask workshops. (144 W. 125th St. Sept. 26, from 1 to 6. No tickets necessary.)

Old Stuff—Clocks, porcelain, and Egyptian antiquities will be among the many items displayed at the New York Armory Antiques Show. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Sept. 22, from 4 to 9; Sept. 23-25, from noon to 9; and Sept. 26, from noon to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

A THOUSAND WORDS—Alison Saar, a sculptor and painter, will participate in the Museum of Modern Art's new "Conversations with Contemporary Artists," on Sept. 24 at 7. (11 W. 53rd St. No charge beyond museum admission. Free tickets, which are required, are available at 6 at the museum's Edward John Noble Education Center.)

MAYORAL RACE—Just in time for the post-primary fallout, it's the twenty-seventh annual Mayor's Cup Race for Schooners and Classic Yachts, including the South Street Seaport Museum's dowagers, the Pioneer and the Lettie G. Howard. On Sept. 25 at 10 A.M. a spectator boat will cast off from Pier 16, with a commentator and sea-chantey singers aboard. (East River at Fulton St. For boat tickets, call 669-9417.) . . . For landlubbers, Battery Park will provide an unobstructed view of the race, which gets under way at 10:50 and will last three or four hours.

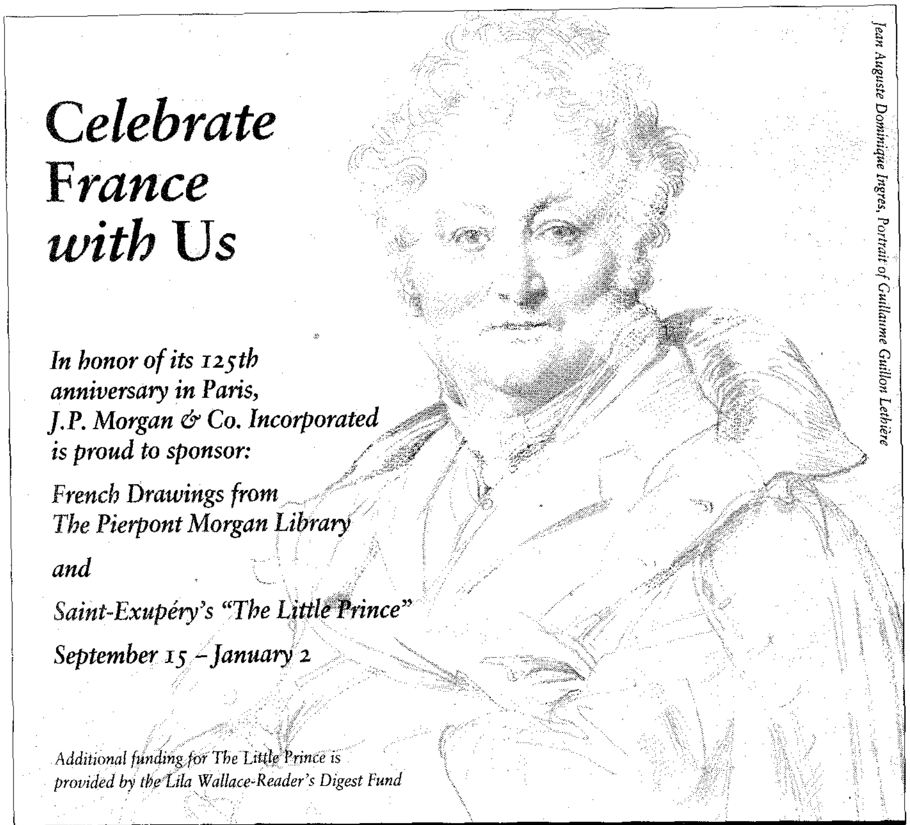
BACK TO THE COLONIES—Before there were credit cards and electric lights, people made their own clothes (and soap and candles), children fashioned dolls out of corn husks, and blacksmiths sounded a daily din on their anvils. The annual Life in the Colonies Festival will take visitors back to the eighteenth century with demonstrations of the above tasks, a staged battle between colonists and British troops, and period games. (Van Cortlandt House Museum, Van Cortlandt Park, Broadway at 242nd St., the Bronx. Sept. 26, from 11 to 4. No tickets necessary.)

READINGS—Sept. 23 at 6:30: Kim Wozencraft will read "Notes from the Country Club," about an imprisoned woman awaiting trial. (Rizzoli Bookstore, 454 West Broadway. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 7:30: Bobbie Ann Mason will read from her new novel, "Feather Crowns." (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 8: Jeffrey Eugenides, Wendy Law-Yone, and Marianne Wiggins, among others, will read poetry and prose in an evening titled "The Silenced Voices of Burma." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 8: James Merrill will read from his memoir, "A Different Person." (Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 6: Robert Hass and Carolyn Kizer will read from their own poetry. (Hudson River Park, Battery Park City. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 7:30: Frank Conroy will read from "Body & Soul," his new novel about a classical pianist who was a child prodigy. (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS—Sept. 22 at 6: Stephen L. Carter, who wrote "Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby" and "The Culture of Disbelief," will talk about "Religion, Law, and Politics in the Early 1990s." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 8: Director, screenwriter, and author Nora Ephron will be interviewed by Charlie Rose and Wendy Wasserstein. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

TOURS & WALKS—Sept. 23 at 6:15 P.M.: Friends of the Parks will lead a tour of Lower Manhattan. For more information, call 473-6283. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 1: Anchors aweigh for the 92nd Street Y at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. For more information, call 996-1100. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 1: Urban Explorations will take in Harlem, from its town houses to its street art. For more information, call 1-718 721-5254. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 1:30: Radical and Big Onion Walking Tours offer their divergent views of Wall Street's history. For more information, call 439-1090.

MEMORANDA—Sept. 22: Autumn falls. . . . ¶ Sept. 24: Yom Kippur begins at sundown.



Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Portrait of Guillaume Guillon Lethière

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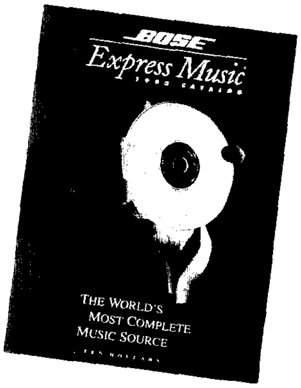

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 26.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Household Saints" (directed by Nancy Savoca), with Tracey Ullman.
Theatre 2: "Especially on Sunday" (Marco Tullio Giordana, Giuseppe Bertolucci, and Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (Sally Potter).
Theatre 4: "Wittgenstein" (Derek Jarman).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Sept. 23: "Johnny Guitar" (1954, Nicholas Ray), with Joan Crawford.
From Sept. 24: "Malina" (1990, Werner Schroeter; in French), with Isabelle Huppert.

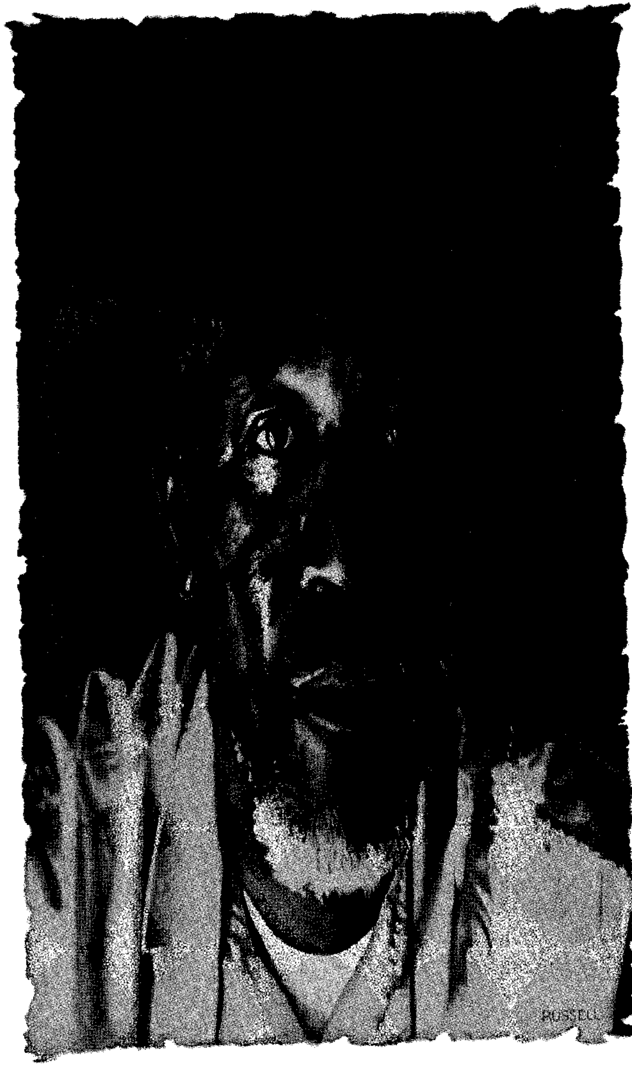
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 2: "True Romance" (†).
Theatre 3: "Airborne" (Rob Bowman).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 2: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).
Theatre 3: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 4: "Boxing Helena" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Sept. 23: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson). From Sept. 24: "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).
Theatre 7: "The Age of Innocence" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Sex Is . . ." (Marc Huestis), a documentary.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 23: "Praying with Anger." From Sept. 24: "Dr. Bethune" (Phillip Borsos), with Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 23: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena). From Sept. 24: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 3: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 4: "Equinox" (Alan Rudolph), with Matthew Modine.
Theatre 5: "House of Angels" (Colin Nutley, in Swedish).
Theatre 6: "The Crush" (Alison Maclean).
Theatre 7: "The Ballad of Little Jo" (Maggie Greenwald), with Suzy Amis.

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (†).
Theatre 2: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).
Theatre 3: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 4: "Morning Glory" (Steven Stern).
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 23: Theatre closed. From Sept. 24: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Fugitive" (†).


Morgan Freeman, director of "Bopha!," opening September 24.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).
Theatre 2: "Betty" (Claude Chabrol; in French).
Theatre 3: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 4: "Boxing Helena" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).
Theatre 2: "Fortress" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Fugitive" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Dr. Bethune" (Phillip Borsos), with Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: "Household Saints" (directed by Nancy Savoca), with Tracey Ullman

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through Sept. 23: "El Cid" (1961, Anthony Mann), with Charlton Heston.
From Sept. 24: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through Sept. 23: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
From Sept. 24: "Baraka" (Mark Magidson and Ron Fricke).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy), with Kim Basinger and Val Kilmer.
Theatre 2: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Jurassic Park" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron), with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 2: "The Age of Innocence" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 2: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 3: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).
Theatre 4: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Secret Garden" (Agnieszka Holland), with Maggie Smith.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (†).
Theatre 2: "Airborne" (Rob Bowman).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Leon the Pig Farmer" (Vadim Jean and Gary Sinyor).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through Sept. 23: Theatre closed.
From Sept. 24: "Bopha!" (Morgan Freeman), with Danny Glover.

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Airborne" (Rob Bowman).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 23: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy). From Sept. 24: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (†).
Theatre 2: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 3: "Morning Glory" (Steven Stern).
Theatre 4: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson), with Gibson.
Theatre 6: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 7: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 23: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena). From Sept. 24: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "The Red Circle" (1970, directed by Jean-Pierre Melville).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media" (Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Fortress" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 23: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy). From Sept. 24: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Bad Behavior" (Les Blair), with Stephen Rea and Sinead Cusack.
Theatre 2: "Tokyo Decadence" (Ryu Murakami).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 23: "Split" (Ellen Fisher Turk and Andrew Weeks), a documentary. From Sept. 24: "Me & Veronica" (Don Scardino), with Elizabeth McGovern, Patricia Wettig, and Michael O'Keefe.
Theatre 4: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).

JAY RUSSELL LEACH

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MOVIE HOUSES–*Cont'd*

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 23: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson). From Sept. 24: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 3: "Fortress" (†).
Theatre 4: "Airborne" (Rob Bowman).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Sept. 23: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy). From Sept. 24: "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).
Theatre 7: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 8: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 9: "The Secret Garden" (Agnieszka Holland), with Maggie Smith.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Hard Target" (John Woo).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer); and (evenings only) "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson).
Theatre 3: "Rising Sun" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Sept. 23: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
From Sept. 24: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 4: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron), with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 5: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 6: "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Age of Innocence" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Morning Glory" (Steven Stern).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Ballad of Little Jo" (Maggie Greenwald).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Bad Behavior" (Les Blair).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Boxing Helena" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
Through Sept. 23: "King of the Hill" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jesse Bradford.
From Sept. 24: "Jamon Jamon" (Bigas Luna; in Spanish).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through Sept. 23: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson), with Gibson.
From Sept. 24: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 2: "Orlando" (Sally Potter).
Theatre 3: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).
Theatre 4: "Samba Traoré" (Idrissa Quédraogo, in Mooré).
Theatre 5: "Divertimento" (†).
Theatre 6: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (Claude Sautet, in French).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Sept. 23: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
From Sept. 24: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 23: "Airborne" (Rob Bowman). From Sept. 24: "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).
Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 3: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (†).
Theatre 4: "Searching for Bobby Fischer" (†).
Theatre 5: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 6: "True Romance" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy), with Kim Basinger and Val Kilmer.
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hard Target" (John Woo); and "Kalifornia" (Dominic Sena).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "True Romance" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 23: "Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday" (directed by Adam Marcus); and "Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes). From Sept. 24: "Warlock: The Armageddon" (Anthony Hickox), with Julian Sands.
Theatre 3: "Undercover Blues" (Herbert Ross).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 23: "Fortress" (†). From Sept. 24: "The Good Son" (Joseph Ruben), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 5: "The Fugitive" (†).
Theatre 6: "True Romance" (†).
Theatre 7: "Airborne" (Rob Bowman).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Sept. 23: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.
From Sept. 24: "The Program" (David S. Ward), with James Caan.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 23: "Calendar Girl" (John Whitesell). From Sept. 24: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.
Theatre 3: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Hard Target" (John Woo).
Theatre 2: "The Real McCoy" (Russell Mulcahy), with Kim Basinger and Val Kilmer.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Sept. 23: "Fallen Angel" (1945, directed by Otto Preminger), with Alice Faye, Dana Andrews, and Linda Darnell; and "The 13th Letter" (1951, Preminger), with Charles Boyer and Darnell.
From Sept. 24: "The Earrings of Madame de . . ." (see page 26).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Sept. 23: "Father of the Bride" (1950, Vincente Minnelli), with Spencer Tracy, Elizabeth Taylor, Joan Bennett, and Don Taylor; and "Conspirator" (1950, Victor Saville), with Robert Taylor and Elizabeth Taylor.
Sept. 24-25: "Ash Wednesday" (†); and "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1958, Richard Brooks), with Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman.
Sept. 26-27: "The White Cliffs of Dover" (1944, Clarence Brown), with Irene Dunne and Alan Marshal; and "Julia Misbehaves" (1948, Jack Conway), with Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon.
From Sept. 28: "The Blue Bird" (1976, George Cukor), with Elizabeth Taylor, Jane Fonda, Cicely Tyson, Ava Gardner, and Will Geer; and "A Little Night Music" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
Through Sept. 23: "Call Northside 777" (1948, Henry Hathaway), with James Stewart and Richard Conte; and "Kiss of Death" (1947, Hathaway), with Victor Mature, Richard Widmark, Coleen Gray, and Brian Donlevy.
Sept. 24-25: "Who'll Stop the Rain" (1978, Karel Reisz), with Nick Nolte, Tuesday Weld, and Michael Moriarty; and "Coming Home" (1978, Hal Ashby), with Jane Fonda, Jon Voight, and Bruce Dern.
Sept. 26-27: "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak), with Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster; and "B.F.'s Daughter" (1948, Robert Z. Leonard), with Stanwyck and Van Heflin.
Sept. 28: "Sanjuro" (1963, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune; and "Yojimbo" (1961, Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Mifune.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Sept. 22: "One, Two, Three" (1961, Billy Wilder), with James Cagney; and "The Apartment" (1960, Wilder), with Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine, and Fred MacMurray.
Sept. 23: "The Philadelphia Story" (1940, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart, Cary Grant, and Ruth Hussey; and "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, Howard Hawks), with Hepburn, Grant, and Charles Ruggles.

Sept. 24-25: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre; and "The 400 Blows" (1959, Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.
Sept. 26: "The Women" (1939, George Cukor), with Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell, Joan Crawford, and Paulette Goddard; and "Dinner at Eight" (1933, Cukor), with Jean Harlow, John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, Marie Dressler, and Billie Burke.
Sept. 27: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Silvia Pinal; and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977, Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina.
Sept. 28: "Psycho" (1960, Alfred Hitchcock), with Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles, John Gavin, and Janet Leigh; and "The Birds" (1963, Hitchcock), with Rod Taylor and Tippi Hedren.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Sept. 23 at 2:30 and Sept. 27 at 6: "Le Plaisir" (1952, directed by Max Ophuls; in French).... ¶ Sept. 23 at 6 and Sept. 25 at 2: "Liebelei" (1932, Ophuls; in German).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 2:30 and Sept. 26 at 5: "Letter from an Unknown Woman" (1948, Ophuls).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 6 and Sept. 26 at 2: "La Ronde" (1950, Ophuls; in French).... ¶ Sept. 25 at 5 and Sept. 28 at 2:30: "Caught" (1948, Ophuls).... ¶ Sept. 27 at 2:30: "The Reckless Moment" (1949, Ophuls).... ¶ Sept. 27 at 6:30: A program of films by Marjorie Keller.... ¶ Sept. 28 at 6: "Lola Montès" (1955, Ophuls; in French).

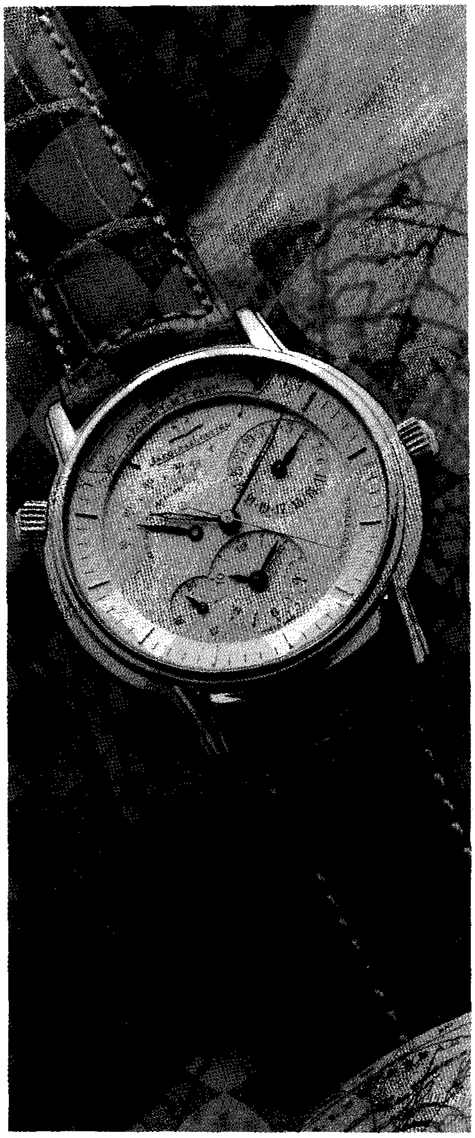
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Sept. 22 at 2 and Sept. 23 at 4 and 8:15: "Peach Blossom Land" (1992, Stan Lai).... ¶ Sept. 22 at 4 and 8:30 and Sept. 23 at 2 and 6:15: "Treasure Island" (1993, Chen Kuo Fu).... ¶ Sept. 22 at 6: "Dark Crystal" (1982, Jim Henson and Frank Oz).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 2 and 8:30, Sept. 25 at 8:30, and Sept. 27 at 6:30 and 9: "Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?" (1989, Bae Yong-Kyan).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 4:30 and Sept. 25 at 4: "The Terrorizers" (1987, Edward Yang).... ¶ Sept. 24 at 6:30 and Sept. 25 at 6: "Rebels of the Neon God" (1992, Tsai Ming-laing).... ¶ Sept. 25 at 2: Episodes from "The Muppet Show."... ¶ Sept. 26 at 2: A behind-the-scenes look at "The Muppet Show."

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Silent Movies/Loud Music," a series of silent films with new musical scores presented by the composers. Sept. 22 at 8 and Sept. 25 at 3: "Man with a Movie Camera" (1928, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film). Music by Tom Cora.... ¶ Sept. 23 at 8 and Sept. 26 at 3: "The Woman in the Moon" (1929, Fritz Lang; a German silent film). Music by Christine Baczewska.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"From Kern to Sondheim: American Musical Theatre on Television." Through Oct. 21: "Show Boat" (1989). Showings Tuesdays through Sundays at 2:30.... ¶ Sept. 23 at 6: "American Musical Comedy" (1956), with Leonard Bernstein.... ¶ Sept. 24 at 6: "Our Town" (1955), with Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint, and Frank Sinatra as the Stage Manager.

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 41st St.—Monday, Sept. 27, starting at dusk, the last in the series of free, drive-in-style moviegoing. The feature film will be "Yankee Doodle Dandy" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with James Cagney.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Sept. 22 at 8: "What About Me" (1992, Rachel Amodeo).... ¶ Sept. 22 at 8, Sept. 23 at 6, Sept. 25 at 10:30, and Sept. 26 at 3: Three different programs of new videos from France.... ¶ Sept. 23-24 at 10, Sept. 25 at 4, and Sept. 26 at 6: "Buster's Bedroom" (1991, Rebecca Horn).... ¶ Sept. 25 at 6 and Sept. 26 at 4: A program of four short films by Phillip Hoffman.



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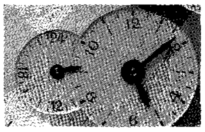

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

The Dishonest Truth

LIKE the ornaments of the title, "The Earrings of Madame de . . ." (playing September 24-30, at Film Forum 2) was initially disparaged and sold cheap but grew in value and impact over time. Max Ophuls' 1953 evocation of Paris's Belle Époque starts as a deft satiric comedy and gradually, almost imperceptibly, turns into a tragedy of emotional displacement and enthrallment. Danielle Darrieux stars as the dazzling, debt-ridden socialite known only as Madame de, who tempts fate by selling the earrings her husband (Charles Boyer), a French general, gave her as a wedding gift—and telling him she lost them. The general discovers that she lied, but he isn't angry or insulted: his and his wife's "conjugal bliss" rests on their urbane mastery of social and sexual deceptions. Soon Madame de falls in love for the first time, with a passionate Italian diplomat, Baron Donati (Vittorio De Sica), who bestows on her the same earrings. They become a delight to Madame de, and a dire threat to her husband's peace of mind.

Ophuls' reputation rests on his expressive use of décor, music, and camera movement, but his delicate and witty work with the actors is what fuels the poetic machinery. Boyer so completely embodies a smart, proud sybarite that he'd actually be likable if he weren't so sadistic; and De Sica epitomizes gallantry, right up to the moment when he judges his mistress too harshly for a big white lie. Darrieux covers the spectrum of aristocratic femininity—she goes from being a heartbreaker to being heartbroken without missing a halftone. This is the least sentimental, most rending romance imaginable: Madame de pledges her devotion to her lover with the words, "I don't love you! I don't love you! I don't love you!"

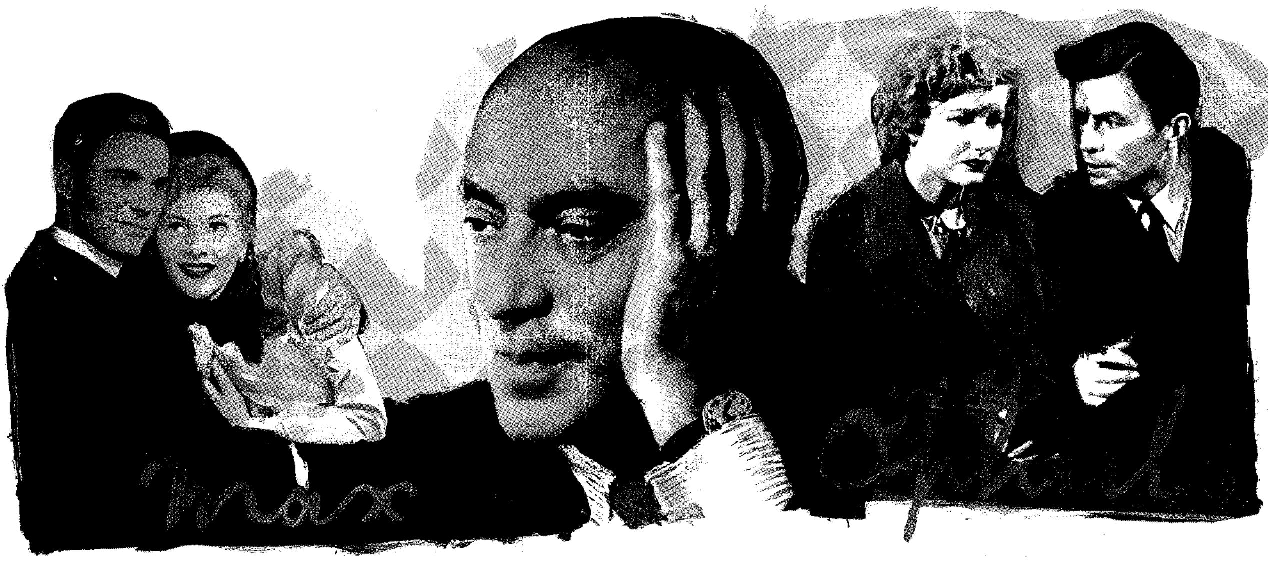
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

The Age of Innocence—Martin Scorsese returns to form with this hectic adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel. Life in the New York of the eighteen-seventies may have been constrained, but it was never dull—not if Scorsese's camera is anything to go by, leaping from detail to detail like the gaze of an inquisitive gentleman. Everything looks right, from roast duck to waistcoats, but the movie has no ambitions to be a costume museum; it homes in on the passions that had to be veiled by good manners. As the film begins—a showy, overwhelming scene at the opera—we see Newland Archer (Daniel Day-Lewis) about to announce a perfect match with the young May Welland (Winona Ryder). Such perfection is a prison, with no hope of escape, and the vigorous sadness of Day-Lewis tells the whole story; he will never rebel, but in his eyes you see him wishing he could. Less fruitful is the casting of Michelle Pfeiffer as May's older cousin, the mysterious Countess Olenska, with whom Archer falls hopelessly in love. With her silly blond curls, Pfeiffer looks more plaintive than the dark exotic of Wharton's imagination. For all that, Scorsese does convince you of their tragedy; the radiant coloring of the movie, fire against darkness, hints at a love that cannot burn for long, and that others will do their best to douse. This is a world run by the snob mob, the GoodFellas of Fifth Avenue, with all the control and none of the bloodshed; no wonder Scorsese feels at home.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/13/93.) (Village Theatre VII, Coronet, and Ziegfeld.)

Ash Wednesday (1973)—In a few scenes, Elizabeth Taylor is done up like Arletty playing Garance in "Children of Paradise," and she's absolutely ravishing, in an unearthly, ageless way. But the film is a long-drawn-out ghoulish commercial for cosmetic surgery—made, apparently, for people who can't think of anything to do with their lives but go backward. Jean-Claude Tramont is credited with the script and Larry Peerce is credited with the direction, but there is no script and there is no direction. With Keith Baxter, Helmut Berger, and Henry Fonda giving a sour, dumb performance.—P.K. (Gramercy; Sept. 24-25.)

Boxing Helena—Jennifer Lynch's directorial début. She appears to have inherited a taste for weirdness from her father, David, but none of the talent. Sherilyn Fenn plays Helena, who spends her life wearing complicated underwear in front of open windows, or else arguing with her boyfriend (Bill Paxton). But she is secretly desired by Nick (Julian Sands), a doctor with mannerisms so nervous that you wouldn't trust him to tie his own shoelaces, let alone wield a scalpel. When Helena is run over, he amputates her crushed legs, and then, for good measure, her arms. With the help of dream lighting and a pelvic soundtrack, Lynch is aiming for a parable of sexual control, a kind of porno "Pygmalion"; but on the whole her work is not garish or goofy enough to become a cult hit; it's just precociously dumb.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Angelika 57.)

Divertimento—Édouard Frenhofer (Michel Piccoli) is a celebrated artist living with his wife, Liz (Jane Birkin), in a gorgeous house in the South of France. He is king of the castle, at least until his reign is disturbed by the arrival of a young admirer, who brings with him a ravishing, taciturn girlfriend called Marianne (Emmanuelle Béart). Asked to pose for the master, she refuses angrily yet still turns up next morning and obligingly removes her clothes—just the kind of odd, unreasoning change of heart that tells us we are watching a Jacques Rivette film. Most of it is taken up by artist and model, and by the tricky exchanges of power that unfold with every sitting. Less well known than other leaders of the French New Wave, Rivette continues to make intricate, demanding movies; originally released in a four-hour version ("La Belle Noiseuse," 1991), the movie has now been cut down to half the length, and a good thing, too. It lacks the fluid wit of his best work, yet there is still much to enjoy: the hypnotic atmosphere of the studio, its calm cracked by frustration, and Piccoli's delicious portrait of an artist at the height of his powers, terrified of falling. In French.—A.L. (9/20/93) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



At Film Forum 2 and MOMA, *films by Max Ophuls.*

GERARD NICOLAS

FORTRESS—The director, Stuart Gordon, and his screenwriters (Steve Feinberg, Troy Neighbors, and Terry Curtis Fox) scatter funny touches and even some signs of warped intelligence throughout this futuristic jailbreak movie. But every iota of their joint imagination has gone into the concept of a privately owned, computerized superprison that descends thirty-three stories underground. The action teeters between camp and sadomasochistic summer camp. Gordon fails to rekindle the manic spark of his 1985 cult hit, "Re-Animator," and Christopher Lambert and Loryn Locklin are disastrous as the hero and heroine, a pair of onetime "Black Berets" who receive stiff sentences for breaking United States anti-breeding laws. Jeffrey Combs and Tom Towles get a few laughs as Lambert's most flamboyant cellmates. But the uncredited female voice of the jailhouse computer, Zed-10, gives the best performance; she ends each announcement by stating "Crime does not pay" in the cool, even tones of a bank teller. With Kurtwood Smith.—M.S. (34th Street Showplace, Waverly, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through Sept. 23.)

THE FUGITIVE—Harrison Ford plays Dr. Richard Kimble, who is wrongly accused of murdering his wife and sentenced to death. What gives this adaptation of the old TV series its extra kick is the presence of Tommy Lee Jones, as U.S. Deputy Marshal Sam Gerard, hot on Kimble's trail, and enjoying the heat. The director is Andrew Davis, who brought us the schlocky "Under Siege"; this is equally tense and insistent, but the two leading men rack it up to a higher level altogether—they even overcome the rude horrors of James Newton Howard's soundtrack. It's a pleasure to find a thriller fulfilling its duties with such gusto: the emotions ring solid, the script finds time to relax into backchat, and for once the stunts look like acts of desperation rather than shows of prowess.—A.L. (8/16/93) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

IN THE LINE OF FIRE—Clint Eastwood plays Frank Horrigan, a tired-looking middle-aged Secret Service agent who gets wind of a plot to kill the President and marshals his flagging powers in an attempt to stop the assassin (John Malkovich). It's a basic race against the clock: the good guy knows what the bad guy means to do; the villain's preparations and the hero's investigation run on separate tracks until they converge, like runaway trains, at the scene of the intended crime. The heroics are stirring, because the star's ravaged face and stiff, weary gestures tell us that everything Horrigan does costs him something, physically and emotionally. The director, Wolfgang Petersen, isn't a particularly imaginative or stylish filmmaker, but he delivers the goods, and in record time. Both Eastwood's performance and the movie itself have the quality of meat-and-potatoes genre-picture entertainment: nothing fancy, nothing unusual. The only hints of more exotic and unpredictable sensations come from Malkovich, who is threatening to become the most gloriously peculiar screen presence since the heyday of Alastair Sim. Also with Rene Russo. Screenplay by Jeff Maguire; music by Ennio Morricone.—T.R. (7/12/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Guild; through Sept. 23.)

THE JOY LUCK CLUB—Amy Tan's 1989 novel is actually a collection of sixteen linked short stories about Chinese immigrant mothers trying to impart their knowledge of life to their Americanized daughters. Unfortunately, Tan and Ronald Bass ("Rain Man"), who wrote the movie, have attempted to cram all her mini-narratives into the script, diminishing instead of enlarging them. The contemporary scenes of marital discord and generational strife seem pat or trite, while the flashbacks to the mothers' woeful lives in China seem overblown or empty and portentous. Wayne Wang's direction doesn't have the oracular pull of Tan's prose, but that's only part of the problem. Tan and Bass rely so heavily on voice-over narration that it sponges up the possibilities for genuine drama and emotion. Even when a woman cuts a piece of skin off her arm to endow her ailing mother's soup with healing powers, or another drowns her baby to punish her husband, the movie's own vital signs stay flat. By the end, the filmmakers just about beg for tears. The cast includes Kieu Chinh, Ming-Na Wen, Tamlyn Tomita, Tsai Chin, France Nuyen, Lauren Tom, Lisa Lu, Rosalind Chao, and Andrew McCarthy.—M.S. (Cinema I, and Cinema II. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and Columbus Circle; starting Sept. 24.)

JURASSIC PARK—Steven Spielberg's warm-blooded, state-of-the-art dinosaurs are a lot speedier than their nearest movie kin, the galumphing atomic-mutant monsters that crunched Japanese cities under their feet in the fifties and early sixties, and that enables the filmmaker to create dynamic stalk-and-chase sequences. But neither the carnivorous dinos nor the placid herbivores inspire anything close to awe, even with the aid of audience stimulants like surging symphonic music (by the shameless John Williams) and repeated closeups of wide-eyed, openmouthed actors. The screenplay, which is credited to Michael Crichton and David Koepp, reduces Crichton's intricately constructed novel to its bare bones: people running away from hungry animals. For all the ingenuity of the movie's engineering, "Jurassic Park" doesn't have the imagination—or the courage—to take us any place we haven't been a thousand times before. It's just a creature feature on amphetamines. With Jeff Goldblum, Laura Dern, Sam Neill, and Richard Attenborough.—T.R. (6/28/93) (59th Street East Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

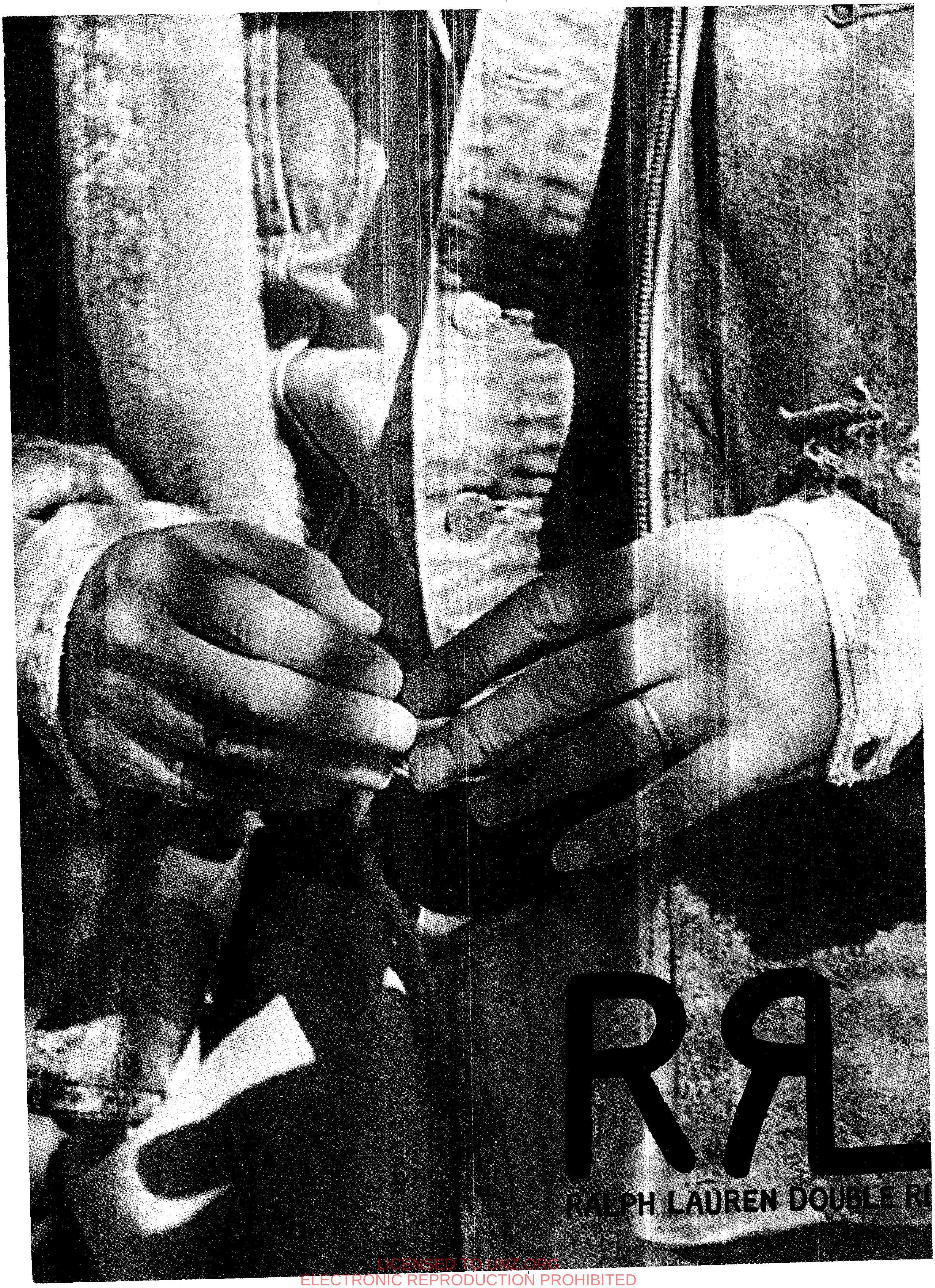
A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC (1978)—You know what you're in for near the beginning, when the hero (Len Cariou) is greeted with "Good afternoon, Lawyer Egerman." This film is a cut above "Song of Norway" and "The Blue Bird," but it's in that general sylvan-settings category. It's an adaptation of the Broadway show, which was a reworking, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and a book by Hugh Wheeler, of Ingmar Bergman's "Smiles of a Summer Night." What was lyrical farce in the Bergman film has now become clodhopping operetta. This picture has been made as if the director (Harold Prince) has never *seen* a movie. With Diana Rigg and Lesley-Anne Down, who manage to get a performance rhythm going in some of their scenes, and with Elizabeth Taylor.—P.K. (Gramercy; starting Sept. 28.)

MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY—Woody Allen's new picture is his lightest and most unabashedly frivolous feature since "Broadway Danny Rose," in 1984. All that the movie aspires to be is a speedy, bubbly screwball-comedy whodunit, and it's pleasant enough, but Allen hasn't practiced the simple act of popular entertainment in quite a while, and he's rusty. The humor thins out as the movie goes along, because Allen tends to labor, and even to repeat, his gags. The main characters, Larry and Carol Lipton (Allen and Diane Keaton), suspect that their across-the-hall neighbor has killed his wife, and try to play detective. You could call the movie a comic version of "Rear Window" if it weren't for the inconvenient fact that "Rear Window" is a much funnier picture. Also with Alan Alda, Anjelica Huston, Jerry Adler, and Lynn Cohen. The screenplay is by Allen and Marshall Brickman.—T.R. (8/23 & 30/93) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

RISING SUN—Philip Kaufman's witty, luxuriantly sinister mystery thriller is set in contemporary Los Angeles: a sleek, corporate environment that isn't merely shady and deceitful, but fundamentally inauthentic, like virtual reality. The murder of a blond party girl in the boardroom of a powerful Japanese corporation exposes a dense network of connections—among business enterprises (Japanese and American), politicians, the police, and the press. The L.A.P.D. detectives investigating the case—Connor (Sean Connery), a Japan expert, and Smith (Wesley Snipes), his young partner—don't stand heroically apart from this alluring corporate culture; they're ambiguous heroes in a looking-glass world. Connery and Snipes are both wonderful here. Kaufman treats cop-movie narrative conventions and film-noir visual style with a kind of affectionate irony; the picture provides plenty of creepy atmosphere and violent action, and its pace is relentless, but the over-all mood is playful, almost giddy. The terrific supporting cast includes Harvey Keitel, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, Tia Carrere, Ray Wise, Kevin Anderson, and Mako. Cinematography by Michael Chapman; music by the great Toru Takemitsu. Based on the novel by Michael Crichton.—T.R. (7/26/93) (Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

SEARCHING FOR BOBBY FISCHER—In his début as a writer-director, Steven Zaillian does to Fred Waitzkin's autobiographical book exactly what he did to Oliver Sacks' "Awakenings" in the script for Penny Marshall's film: he shears away the fascinating details and the complicated mesh of real-life characters, and constructs a hollow little fable about the need to lead a free, independent, and well-rounded life. Max Pomeranc, a highly ranked young chess player offscreen, plays Josh Waitzkin (Fred's son), a prodigy who shows his parents (Joe Mantegna and Joan Allen) and the whole chess world that nice guys can finish first. Zaillian forces the cast into a moral paradigm: Mantegna is the competitive parent, Allen is the humanistic one; Ben Kingsley is the instinct-squelching teacher, who passes his own fear and loathing about winning *and* losing to his student, while Laurence Fishburne is the intuitive one, a Washington Square Park speed-chess freak who inspires exuberant invention. Zaillian never figures out how to explicate a chess match; maybe that's why he has to stoop to a "Rocky" ending. This movie could have used a director who both loved chess and was enough of a technical wizard to make it cinematic. Maybe the producers should have spent more time searching for Stanley Kubrick.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

TRUE ROMANCE—Cool jerks rapping about pop culture, titillating torture scenes, acting-class bits in which mild-mannered types bluff their way through perilous situations, and a big action set piece planned like a three-sided game of ticktacktoe. That's the formula behind this slick, repellent couple-on-the-run movie, directed by Tony Scott and written by Quentin Tarantino, who used the same ingredients as the writer-director of last year's "Reservoir Dogs." The outlaw newlyweds are Patricia Arquette, a semi-innocent call girl, and Christian Slater, a former comic-book-store clerk who gets advice from Elvis Presley the way Woody Allen got advice from Bogart in "Play It Again, Sam." (Elvis is played by Val Kilmer.) Slater develops a hankering to murder Arquette's ex-pimp (Gary Oldman), and since this flesh peddler is a figure of pure evil, no one's too upset when Slater offs him—except for the mobsters who want the drug stash that winds up in Slater's hands. The filmmakers try to make Arquette and Slater lovably goofy compared to the rest of the characters, including the atavistic mafiosi of Detroit and the coke-snorting scuzzballs of Hollywood. Tarantino and Scott are as much prisoners of pop fantasy as Arquette and Slater; they transform everything in their path into a cheap turn-on. With Dennis Hopper, Christopher Walken, Bronson Pinchot, Saul Rubinek, Chris Penn, Michael Rapaport, and Brad Pitt.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)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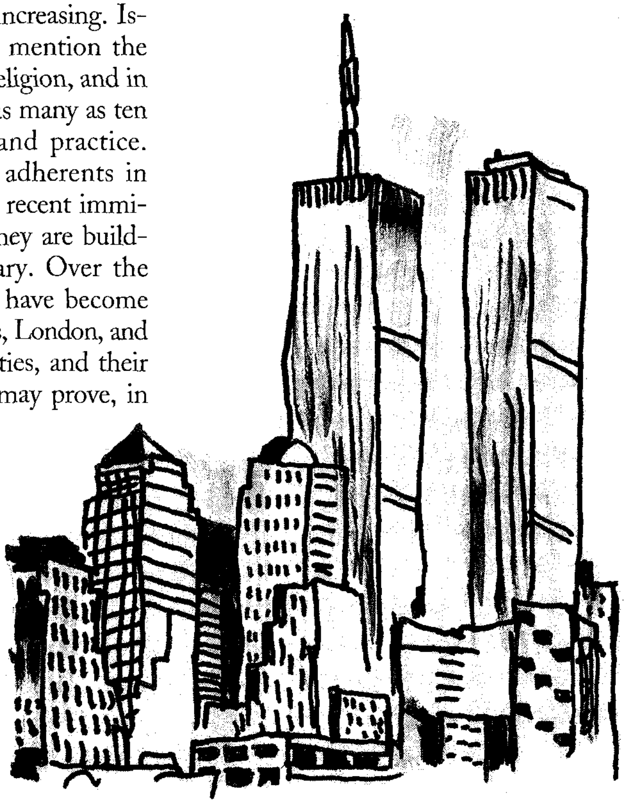
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE VIEW FROM A JERSEY CITY MOSQUE

In early morning, the vast shadow of the World Trade Center points literally, as it has done figuratively since last winter, to Jersey City, where the terrorist plot to bomb the Trade Center is alleged to have been hatched. Seen from the perspective of a not so imaginary immigrant—a recent arrival from Egypt, say, poor and struggling in a harsh economy, marooned in an old waterfront town along the Hudson, homesick and disoriented—the Trade Center towers, always a bit overwhelming, could seem a lot more so: preëminent symbols of cool, godless, Western wealth. Masjid Al-Salam, the mosque where Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman preached, and where two of the four men who went on trial last week for bombing the Trade Center regularly worshipped, is perhaps at the opposite extreme on the spectrum of physical grandiosity. It is a scuffed, cramped room above a variety store in Journal Square, a commercial area west of downtown Jersey City, and is reached by a narrow, rotting staircase. The *masjid's* innumerable appearances on TV after the arrests of the bombing suspects somehow never conveyed its true homeliness—its sadness, its smell, the tiny, rusted-out kitchen opening onto the tarpaper roof. Officially closed for a zoning violation, the mosque still sees a trickle of worshippers, who leave their shoes at the door, perhaps scan the Help Wanted notices in Arabic tacked on a wall, and then, facing Mecca, recite part of the Koran before kneeling and touching their foreheads to the carpet. Plans exist to move Masjid Al-Salam to a warehouse about eight blocks away; in the meantime, most of its members have found their way to other mosques in the area.

There is an abundance to choose from. Greater New York, which twenty years ago had no more than a dozen mosques, now has around two hundred and fifty, and the number of small storefront mosques keeps increasing. Islam is America's—not to mention the world's—fastest-growing religion, and in Jersey City alone perhaps as many as ten thousand Muslims live and practice. Though most of Islam's adherents in and around New York are recent immigrants, the communities they are building are far from temporary. Over the past generation, mosques have become prominent features of Paris, London, and other famously Christian cities, and their flourishing in New York may prove, in the long run, more emblematic of this era than the construction of a few more glass-skinned citadels of commerce in lower Manhattan. If Jersey City has nothing like the immense, glittering new mosque at Third Avenue and Ninety-sixth Street, it does have any number of thriving *masjids* that bear no resemblance to the dank and embattled Al-Salam.



The oldest mosque in Jersey City, founded in 1974, is housed in the Islamic Center, and former members of Al-Salam are thought to now worship there. The Center, which includes a full-time Muslim school, fills a cavernous old building, originally a Masonic temple, in a depressed black neighborhood on the south side of town, and draws pupils and members from a number of different countries. The mosque itself, up on the third floor, is a magnificent space: barrel-ceilinged, simple, sweet-smelling, immaculate. On a late-summer morning, a few men in robes and prayer caps sit quietly on the carpeted floor, barefoot, reading before a bookcase. The room, with its delicate, mint-green pillars and big arched windows, seems to float in some low-key Islamic empyrean above the hurly-burly of the ghetto. Members say that the neighborhood, with its violent drug trade, discourages attendance, but when midday services begin on Fridays, and a bearded Egyp-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY PANTER

tian imam starts to recite from the Koran, hundreds of worshippers materialize, their cars jamming the lot outside.

Most of the worshippers are men—a few dozen women, in full-length dresses, their heads covered by the traditional *hijab*, gather at the back—and they come in all sizes and colors, Arabs and Pakistanis and African-Americans, in flowing robes and double-breasted suits and T-shirts, some wearing baseball hats or the Muslim skullcap called a *kufi*. The men kneel in long silent rows, listening to the imam preach, in Arabic, about the teachings of the prophets Yūsuf and Sulaymān (Joseph and Solomon) and the rules that govern the good Muslim life. The imam, his manner both severe and exuberant, extolls the virtues of serenity, moderation, and pureheartedness, and his congregation, for all its variety, does seem united by a certain quietude, an undemonstrative carriage that is rare, especially, in the American inner city. Those who don't understand Arabic wear headphones, picking up a simultaneous translation of the sermon from an English speaker in an office adjoining the mosque. At the end of the sermon, the entire congregation chants a prayer, then all press their foreheads to the floor.

"Islam Is the Solution," according to a bumper sticker plastered on a filing cabinet in the adjoining office. And the problem, in the opinion of a group of Egyptian men who have gathered in the office, seems to be not geopolitics but the stresses and uncertainties of immigrant life. Each man, at least, notes the same thing: that he has become more religious since coming to the United States. "In Cairo, I hardly thought about it," a sandy-haired plumber named Mohamed says. "Here my religion is the center of my life." Even a director of the Islamic Center, Said Sharaf, says that his own piety was minimal before he immigrated. Now he leads a group of sixty or seventy believers on the hajj to Mecca each year. Mr. Sharaf, a fifty-three-year-old economist who grew up in rural Egypt and has the careful, elaborate manners of a diplomat, has seen the local Muslim community grow about twentyfold since he first came to the United States, in 1970. He has also seen the Islamic Center's Al-Ghazly School grow, in the seven years since its founding, into a formidable private academy, with two hundred and fifty students of all ages, from prekindergarten through high school. Nearly all the school's graduates go on to college. "They learn the American program, plus Arabic languages and Islamic studies," he says, as a radio passing on the street blasts gangster rap. "Discipline is not a problem," he adds.

This familiar story—the parochial school easing immigrants into the American mainstream—has traditionally had its political concomitant, as the new group gains electoral weight, and, in fact, politicians now make courtesy calls on the Islamic Center. Bret Schundler, the mayor of Jersey City, comes, and so do other elected officials. Though most of the recent boom in the local Muslim population has been driven by the immigration of single men from the Middle East and Asia seeking work, many men stay and marry and start families. (Mr. Sharaf is married to an Irish-American.) Some acquire American citizenship; some even become Republicans.

When Mr. Sharaf is asked about the World Trade Center bombing trial, he is diplomatic. "We believe that anyone is innocent until he is proved guilty," he says. "If they are proved guilty, we will support that." Concerning Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, Mr. Sharaf says, carefully, "He doesn't like our Center. He never came over here and gave even one speech. I never went to hear him speak or attended his prayer. There was no . . . chemistry between us."

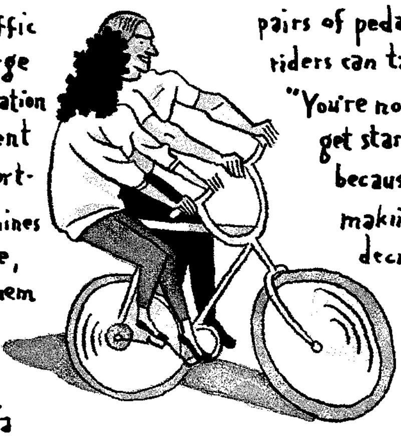
ARAFASHIONS

YASIR ARAFAT boarded a Moroccan-government Boeing 707 in Tunis on Sunday, September 12th, wearing "military fatigues and his pistol," according to the New York *Times*. The London *Daily Telegraph* reported that "en route he . . . changed into a safari suit." Emerging from his plane at Andrews Air Force Base on Sunday afternoon, Arafat appeared in "an olive military dress jacket and trousers, a tan open-collared shirt and his trademark black and white kaffiyeh and ascot," according to the *Times*. The Sacramento *Bee* observed, "The pistol that was on his hip when he left Tunis, Tunisia, had vanished."

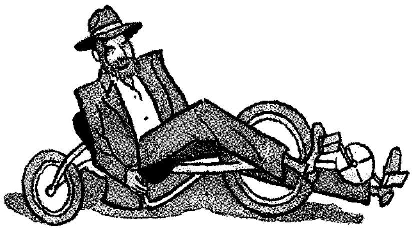
TRANSPORTED

Are people-powered vehicles the answer to New York's traffic and pollution problems? George Bliss, an alternative-transportation advocate, thinks so. One recent Sunday, he displayed an assortment of muscle-motored machines at an Eco-Fair in Union Square, and invited passersby to try them out.

by Steven Guarnaccia



Michele Reese and John Bozak on the Buddy Bike, which has two side-by-side seats, two sets of handlebars, and two pairs of pedals, so that riders can talk to each other. "You're not sure how to get started on it because you're not making all the decisions," John said. "I'm the brakes in our relationship, she steers."



Boruch Selevan, on a Brike (for Brian and Mike, its American inventors), said, "I don't even have a driver's license. I have an old Rollfast, maybe 30, 40 years old. I think it's good people should see that religious Jews, conservative on some issues, on other issues can be quote-unquote very progressive."

According to the London *Times*, "Palestinian sources disclosed that two suits had been packed, indicating that he might yet use his sartorial style at the ceremony on the White House lawn to demonstrate his transformation to statesman." "One gray and one khaki," the Washington *Post* said. England's *Guardian* asked, "What of his keffiyeh, which even the stuffy New York Times calls tablecloth head-wear?"

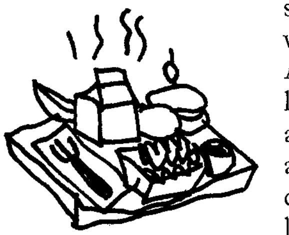
Arafat arrived at the White House on Monday "dressed in his familiar khaki uniform and black-and-white checked Arab headdress," according to the New York *Times*. "His trademark kaffiyeh" was "draped in the shape of a map of Palestine," the Associated Press said. "It is fashionable, functional, and when P.L.O. chairman Yasser Arafat wears it, very political," noted New York *Newsday*. "His coat," remarked the Washington *Post*, "has the massiveness of the sort of thing Russian generals wear. Or Castro. Or Tito! . . . Is it possible Arafat gets his clothes made by Tito's old tailor?"

On Tuesday, "dressed in the same checkered Arab headdress and olive drab uniform he wore to meet President Clinton, a gunless Arafat began his busy day sipping coffee with senators" (*Daily News*). "During a luncheon appearance before the National Press Club, Arafat adjust[ed] kaffiyeh headdress" (Washington *Post*), and he "strummed the chords of militant Palestinian pride by declaring that he would not turn in his familiar khaki-colored uniform and kaffiyeh for a business suit" (New York *Times*), before heading for New York and the United Nations, where "he fix[ed] his headdress" (New York *Post*).

"Give me a state," Arafat told Tel Aviv's *Yediot Ahranot*, "and I will wear a tux and bow tie."

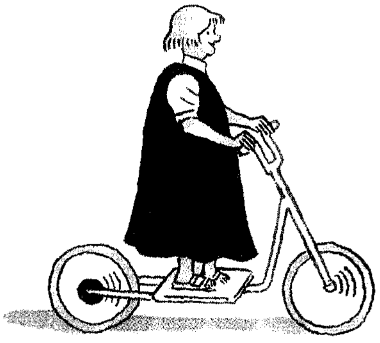
750,000 TRAYS

Denise Toulon is the food-technology director of the New York City Board of Education's School Food and Nutrition Service, and last week, from her desk alongside the banana-ripeness chart, she was firmly leading her team of food-service managers through the asbestos crisis that postponed the reopening of New York's schools. There were problems. A few days earlier, for instance, a vender had attempted to deliver a truckload of frozen entrées to a school in the Bronx that was fresh out of students, and Mrs. Toulon was forced to personally intervene. But such difficulties were not so great or so many; the food-technology team remained poised to deliver seven hundred and fifty thousand breakfasts, lunches, and dinners—the largest meal count in the nation—within minutes of the schools' opening. "I want to tell you," Mrs. Toulon told us in her pleasing West Indian lilt, "we are ready."



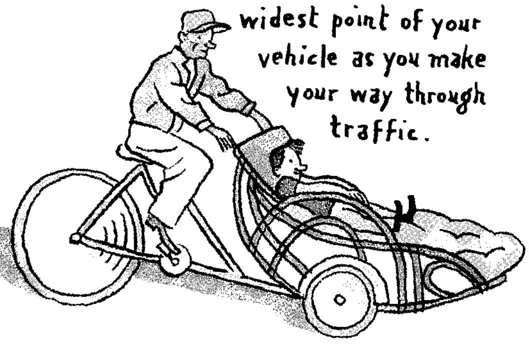
The long career of Mrs. Toulon has been marked by an exemplary balance of innovation and bulk produce and grocery management. During the eighties in a previous post—that of school-food coördinator for Manhattan—she promoted the kinds of batch-cookery skills that made it possible to turn out in a few small kitchens enough donated processed-beef crumbles to feed as many as seventeen hundred students at one time in the expanding schools of Inwood and Washington Heights. More recently, she has been steadfast in her use of promotional entrée titles, which she believes enhance palatability—titles such as Buddy Burgers, Mermaid's Special, Tuna Tempters, and My Hero. A compact, bespectacled woman with short reddish-brown hair, Mrs. Toulon is the type of person who can look back fondly on the historic amounts of free cheese the federal government has given to public schools and then can bubble with excitement over a new chicken-lo-mein dish currently being developed at her behest. The proof of exactly the kind of food-technology director that Denise Toulon is, however, lies in her daily bowl of oatmeal, which she eats at her home, in Queens, at precisely 5:45 A.M. "I practice what I preach," she said. "You have to start the day with a good breakfast."

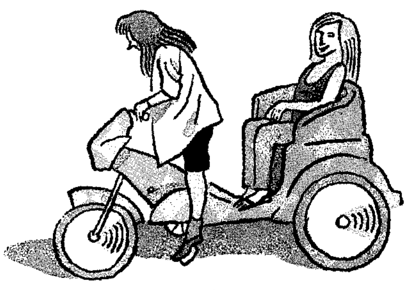
From the food-services warehouse in Long Island City, Mrs. Toulon continues to change the menus for the city's twelve hundred school sites as the tastes of New York's children change. At the



Dolores Bentham, a high-school science teacher, cut an elegant figure in black-and-white on the bright-yellow Bony. The Bony is propelled forward as the rider bounces up and down on the center platform.

Talking about the Front Chaise (this one made from a rattan rocker), George Bliss explained that for New York putting the load in front makes sense, as you can then see the widest point of your vehicle as you make your way through traffic.





Deborah Blau and Diane Diez in a pedicab, from Honolulu by way of Miami. There were two at the fair, one hot pink, the other lime green. Bliss wants to get a pedicab operation going in New York.

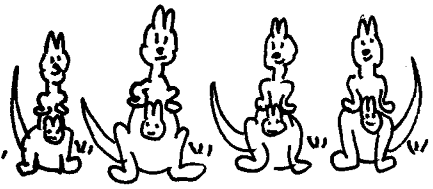
moment, she said, Jamaican beef patties are a hit in Caribbean neighborhoods, like Flatbush; lower-fat turkey franks, on the other hand, while nearly impossible to give away most places, are savored in District 2, a bastion of nutrition-savvy parents on the Upper East Side. Remarkably, vegetables seem to be on an upswing. "Kids throughout the city are beginning to accept vegetables," Mrs. Toulon said. "We have come a long way in vegetable acceptability." However, as has been standard through modern school-lunch history, pizza still rules. "If you have pizza on any given day in a school, I would say everyone's going to eat it," Mrs. Toulon said. "So you could be talking about five hundred thousand orders of pizza. Oh, yes, quite possibly five hundred thousand, I should think."

Near the end of our visit with Mrs. Toulon, we participated in an informal taste-testing. The dish was eggplant prepared rollatine style, and Mrs. Toulon, her assistant beside her, offered us a white plastic-foam plate holding two rollatines, one right side up, the other inverted and unfortunately proportioned. When we cut into the right-side-up rollatine with a plastic fork, Mrs. Toulon, who'd been watching with her arms folded, suddenly raised her right index finger in the air. "Do you know why you chose the one you did?" she asked. "Because we eat with our eyes, too." Then she turned to her assistant and pointed to the rollatines. "Those are part-skim cheeses, am I right?"

"Oh, yes," the assistant replied. "They certainly are."

"Very good," Mrs. Toulon said, her arms folded again. "That's much less fat."

CLOSER ENCOUNTERS (MAYBE) OF AN ANIMAL KIND



Near the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard, on the grounds of Brooklyn's old Prospect Park Zoo, there waits a group of six worried wallabies. Springy, pint-size cousins of the kangaroo, they're to be the principal—if somewhat shifty—focus of an exhibit called Wallaby Walkabout. It's to be one of the feature attractions of the Prospect Park Wildlife Center, New York's first full-scale "interactive" children's zoo, scheduled to open October 5th—by which time, it is hoped, at least one or two wallabies here will be willing to mingle with their visitors. "They're back there somewhere," Richard Lattis, the director of New York City's Wildlife Centers and a co-designer of the 12.5-acre exhibit, said the other day, as he peered out over a simulation of grassy Australian outback.

Three weeks before opening day is an offbeat, edgy time at a zoo. Over at the old ape and elephant houses—now fully carpeted, odorless, and renamed the Animals in Our Lives and Animal Lifestyles Buildings—the inhabitants were all pressed off to the side of their glass-enclosed habitat squares. There was a luminous-green tree frog in a bare white corner; hyraxes bunched atop a plastic boulder; meerkats, recently arrived from the San Diego Zoo, all climbing into each other—one tremulous fur ball with four twitchy, periscope heads. (No mingling here; kids are to "interact" with the animals in these buildings by observing and drawing them.)

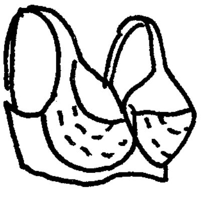
The prairie dogs were still in quarantine. The emus were in transit. The sea lions were scheduled to arrive the following week. But the most substantial journey may be the one that has already been made from old zoo to new center. Gone are the barred concrete animal dens, and the yellow-tiled rooms containing one chained log, in deference to the occupant's original habitat—places where one encountered the aura and the odor of the animal, and any interaction was most likely one way. Not long before that zoo closed, in 1989, and the bears, elephants, big cats, apes, and rhinos were shipped to suburban habitats, two neighborhood boys climbed a fence to take a swim in the polar bears' moat. Only one boy made it out. When the police arrived, they saw the body of the other being pawed at by the bears and killed them with shotguns. A new administration building covers that area now, with a row of topiary creatures out front leading toward the entrance to the Discovery Trail, where kids will have the chance to tunnel up into Plexiglas bubbles and participate in the prairie dogs' day, and, in an adjacent marsh, sit in "child-sized goose nests." Then they'll arrive at the outback.

For now, there's just a thin wire looped along the front edges of Wallaby Walkabout, and it's meant for people. "We call this a 'please fence,' " Lattis explained, "as in 'Please stay on your side of it.' Eventually, I guarantee, the wallabies will be walking right around here among the kids, but I can't promise anything until we've been open awhile. In a situation like this, the key is to give the animal a place it can go and people can't, so we've built a refugium back there for when the wallabies say, 'That's it. I've had it. I'm outta here.' "

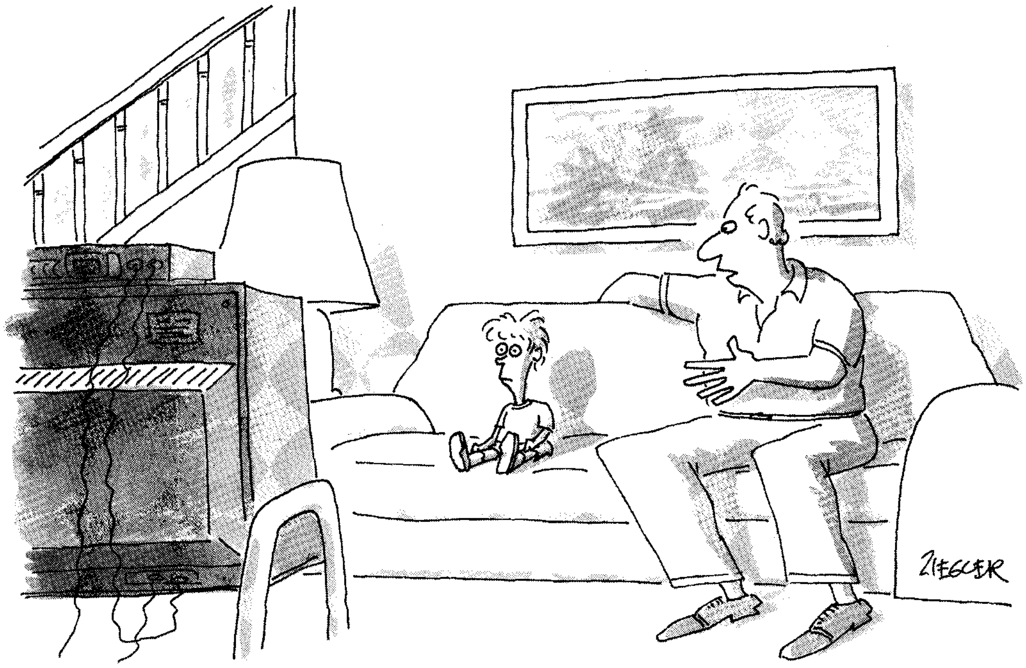
Near the please fence is a miniature long-jump pit with white signs set beside it. All are blank but the last: "Wallaby—12ft." In the coming days, words like "flea," "frog," and "rabbit" will be written on the blank ones, and kids will take turns trying to leap as far as a wallaby. "We've brought a bunch of members' kids through," Lattis said, standing at the takeoff board, a big man with a formidable front pouch of his own. "Most don't make it much past 'Flea.' "

Behind him now, with a slight rustle, a wallaby appeared. He blinked, two tiny paws testing the air, and took one tentative hop forward into Brooklyn's daylight.

UPLIFTING



If you're the kind of person who gets a kick out of saying "bosom" and "breast" and "bustline uplift," you ought to go visit the Maidenform Museum, on East Thirty-seventh. That way, you can walk around the display with the curator, Catherine C. Brawer, and ask questions like "Did the bandeau that preceded the brassiere squish the breast or just *smoosh* it?" and "When did natural shaping supplant the torpedo?" and "Can you please elaborate on the nipple?" If you pretend to be a scholar, you can then pause for a really long time in front of the best pair of breasts in New York City—which are on a miniature mannequin, are perfectly shaped and absolutely firm, and have a one-inch forward thrust—and say, "The semiotic evolution of window displays sure is *interesting*, isn't it?" and hope that Ms. Brawer is suddenly called away. If she isn't—and don't get your hopes up—she will probably stand there with you and point out that the mannequin with the terrific breasts is wearing a pe-



"You see? Once more, Wile E. Coyote is restored swiftly and miraculously to health. His potential trauma has been trivialized, and we are yet again amused."

tite copy of a 34-B Interlude bra, made of Alençon lace and broadcloth, with trapunto stitching on the undercup, which Maidenform marketed in the nineteen-thirties for women who prefer "the rounded as well as uplifted bustline." Then you will drop the scholar shtick and just observe that the Interlude and the other little bras made for this particular display—a teensy version of the Dec-La-Tay, made of fine peach netting with a lace edge and satin straps, and a Ves-T-Lace, which was designed for the fuller figure but, in this instance, would just about fit your thumb—are totally cute.

Then you might ask a reasonable question, like "Where did Maidenform get all these old bras for the museum?," and Ms. Brawer will answer that some guy who used to work for the company catalogued almost every single style that Maidenform made—the Chansonette, the Star Flower, the Tric-O-Lastic, the Twice Over, the Blue Horizon, the Maidenette, the Semi-Accentuate, the Hold-Tite, the Gree-Shen, the Allo, the Allo-Ette, the Allegro, and so forth—and when she is finished, you will definitely not say anything about leg men versus boob men. Because that would be childish. Especially when Ms. Brawer goes on to tell you that the museum has regular visits from the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders from I.S. 246 in Brooklyn and C.S. 211 in the Bronx and, to the best of her recollection, none of the students ever giggle. "They come here prepared," she will say. "They are here to work."

So you will work, too. You will take a lot of notes about the Maidenform war effort, which involved designing cotton-gingham bras, because nylon was requisitioned for parachutes, and also manufacturing carrier-pigeon vests, which are almost as cute as the tiny 34-B Dec-La-Tay, and you will study the display highlighting the twenty-year history of the "I Dreamed . . ." ad campaign ("I dreamed I barged down the Nile in my Maidenform Bra"), and you might even copy down the text from an "I Dreamed . . ." ad that ran in Denmark (*"Jeg drømte, jeg blev forfulgt i min Maidenform b.h."*), commenting to Ms. Brawer that Danish is quite a poetic-looking language, just so you can take another long cheap look at some ladies in their underwear.

O.K. You're done, you stared at lots of breasts, you managed to maintain some dignity, you believe Ms. Brawer may actually still view you as an adult. Then she says, "Oh, I've got to show you something hilarious," and she leads you into a conference room and pulls out an atlas and turns to a map of the Grand Tetons—a name you always got a giant charge out of—and she says, "My husband and I went on vacation in Wyoming this summer, and, honest to God, we were looking at the map and look at *this*," and she points to a spot between upper Moran and Leigh Canyons, about three-quarters of a mile south of Peak 49, and there it is on the map: Maidenform Peak, elevation 11,137. "Can you believe it?" Ms. Brawer says, grinning. "And it's a *twin* peak."

NOT CAFFEINATED

THE Jonathan Morr Espresso Bar, on Sixth Avenue between Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh Streets, is lit by wall fixtures shaped like coffee cups. Is this the coffee generation? Probably not. Real cities, the kind that put their own stamp on any novel development, aren't going to be affected one way or another by the opening of a couple of dozen jewel-box "coffee bars." Even the name is suspect, as if the masculine potency of "bar" were necessary to prod this weary idea into New York's reflexive trend pages. The curious and impressionable may be viewed in these half-empty storefront venues reading about the excitement of the coffee scene uptown and down. They look puzzled. Their ultimate disappointment will verge on profound.

The coffee quaffer Walt Whitman sits in Pfaff's on Broadway and laughs at the pretense of novelty replacing activity. Waitresses in all the coffeehouses of the Village look down at their scuffed flats, embarrassed for the future of poetry and jazz. Morning-shift truckers in Washington Heights gulp their splendid *café con leche*, steeling themselves to deliver burnished sconces to the next new Daily Doppio.

The coffee vogue is supposed to have come from Seattle, an idealistic city whose dominant colors are moss and gray. It is a city proud of its coffee. What, however, does it mean to be "proud" of coffee? In Seattle, many young persons can be seen knocking back double espressos and circling want ads in the middle of the day.

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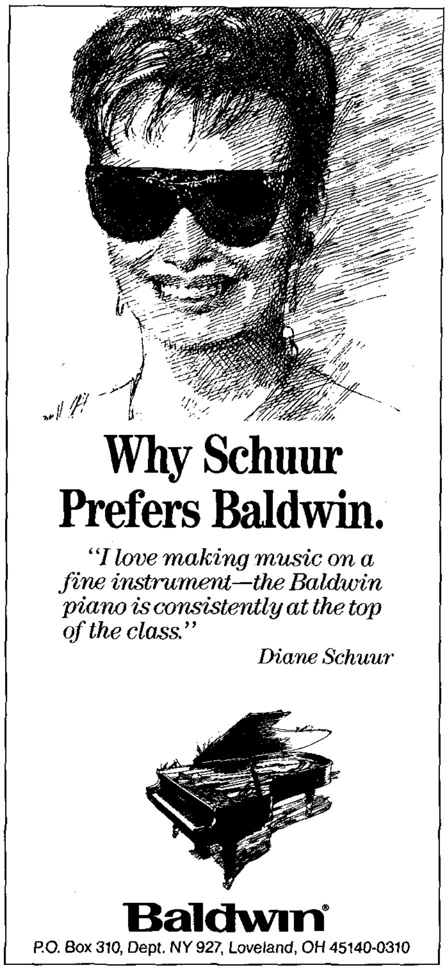

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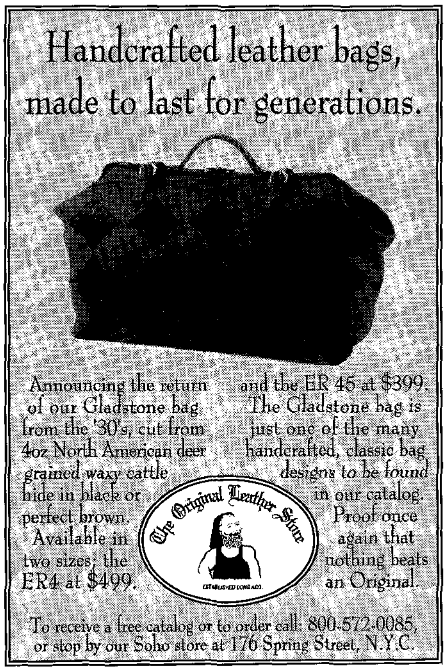

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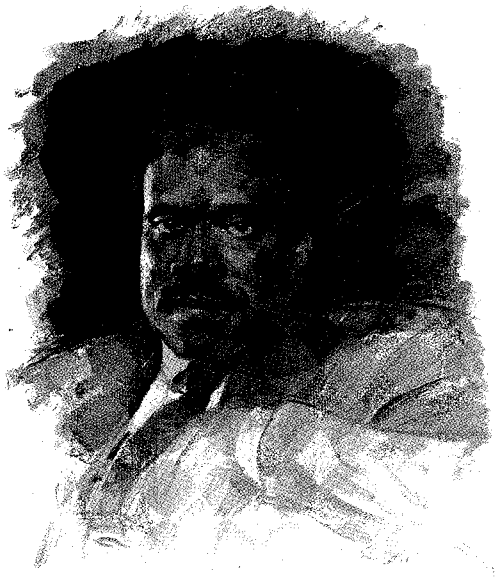
ANNALS OF LAW

THE BURDEN OF CLARENCE THOMAS

His Supreme Court record attests that Thomas is still an angry man. Now, in an unprecedented step for a Justice, he is taking his politics public.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

CLARENCE THOMAS was fed up with suffering in silence. It was May 1, 1993, more than a year and a half after his confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee held untold millions of Americans frozen in front of their television sets. In those proceedings, Anita Hill had testified, in unforgettably graphic detail, that Thomas had sexually harassed her, and he had denied it. The confrontation passed immediately into folklore, and names and incidents that skidded across the public airwaves took permanent root in the national consciousness. Hill and Thomas themselves became icons of comedy, conflict, and sexual politics. Thomas had, of course, won his seat as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, but that victory could not undo the large and small humiliations he had endured. In cartoons one still finds Justice Thomas portrayed holding a can of Coke. (Hill testified that Thomas once asked her, "Who has put pubic hair on my Coke?") In spite of it all, Thomas maintained his public silence—until that brilliant spring day in his native Georgia.


Thomas's every vote—even his every public utterance, written or spoken—seems designed to outrage the liberal establishment that so venerated Thurgood Marshall.

FRANCIS LIVINGSTON

The place where Thomas chose to break his silence was revealing. He decided to give the Law Day address at the Walter F. George School of Law, a small and decidedly conservative institution affiliated with Mercer University, in the sleepy city of Macon. (Walter George was a United States senator from Georgia from 1922 to 1957 and, among other things, an ardent segregationist.) Mercer is, in truth, far from a major American law school, but then Thomas's choices were limited. He clearly could not abide the protests he knew would greet him in any major metropolitan area. Indeed, six months after he joined the Supreme Court he had cancelled an appearance to judge an evening moot-court competition at the Seton Hall University School of Law, in Newark, New Jersey, when he learned that a women's student group was planning a candlelight vigil. If there was one university in the nation where Thomas could be all but guaranteed a hospitable welcome, Mercer was it. Yet even at Mercer the question of Thomas's reception was not left to chance. Philip D. Shelton, the dean of the law school, sent a memorandum to all students saying that, even though he knew the "invitation to Justice Thomas has met with some controversy," he had promised Thomas that Mercer "would offer him a civil, respectful and hospitable environment in which he might speak freely about whatever subject he deemed appropriate." Fortuitously, the speech also was scheduled for a luncheon on the Saturday before most students would begin their final exams.

Other Supreme Court Justices travel with few, if any, security precautions, but the protective effort for Thomas rivalled that for a Presidential candidate. A bomb-sniffing dog from a nearby Air

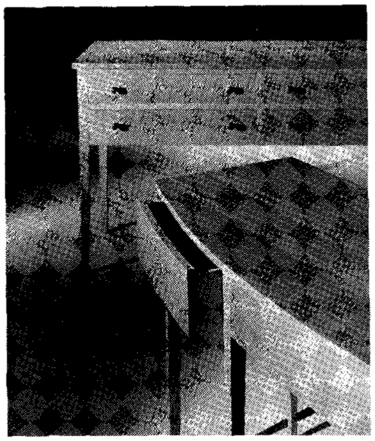
Force base made the rounds of the grand ballroom of the downtown Radisson Hotel, where the speech was to be delivered. More than a dozen police officers and United States marshals—some of them wearing patches on their uniforms that said "Sheriff's Special Forces Special Weapons Assaults Tactics Bibb County Ga."—patrolled the lobby and the ballroom as the luncheon guests, mostly Mercer alumni, filed in. The marshals handed out pins bearing the code "E-5" to those who would sit at Thomas's table, so that any guests without the proper markings who tried to approach him could be identified and stopped. Promptly at twelve-thirty, Thomas approached the entranceway, on crutches. Two weeks earlier, he had torn his Achilles tendon playing basketball with his law clerks on "the highest court in the land," which is how the basketball court on the top floor of the Supreme Court Building is known. But Thomas is a youthful forty-five, and he moved so briskly on the crutches that his tie bounced on his well-muscled chest.

To see Clarence Thomas walk into a crowded room is to appreciate both the magnitude and the burden of his renown: he is no less instantly recognizable for being seldom seen. He is the rarest kind of American celebrity—an invisible one. Conversation in the ballroom ceased when he entered. People he passed took a half step backward; they seemed physically jolted by the presence of someone so famous. Many gaped unashamedly. The plainclothes marshals who were accompanying Thomas took wary note of every camera pointed at him. But if the attention bothered Thomas he did not show it. After he took his seat, he appeared to enjoy the company of his luncheon companions. Several times, he hopped up cheerfully on his good leg to pose for photographs.

When the Justice rose to speak, however, his demeanor turned grave, for he moved quickly to the subject of his confirmation hearings. Many public figures—particularly politicians—cultivate a magnanimous air about past battles, especially if, as with Thomas, they ended in victory. But in public and private, Thomas's rage on the subject is evergreen. "His growing up was predicated on not giving in, not capitulating," Alex Netchvolodoff, a friend and former colleague of Thomas's on the staff of Senator John Danforth, told me. "If he were to say 'Let bygones be bygones' about the hearings, he'd see that as a capitulation. And Thomas is not going to give in to what was done to him."

To his audience in Macon (there were approximately seven hundred and fifty people in attendance, of whom sixteen were black) Thomas said, "I will never be able to express how much the support of my fellow-Georgians meant to my family and me during those bleak days in the summer and fall of 1991." Georgia, he said, would always be home. "As that inglorious summer wore on, home came to me in the form of letters, cards, calls, prayers, flowers. And today as I stand here I know that it was all worth it."

"The prejudice and racial hatred that drove our national consciousness has complex and, to a certain degree, undiscoverable roots," Thomas said, "but one of its consequences was the lack of civility toward members of my race." Then he addressed his main subject. "Today, I am here to share my thoughts about a principle that seems to be falling out of fashion these days—civility," he said. "For if we have learned anything from the hardship, it is that no good can ever come of treating others badly." Thomas observed that while much had changed in American society since he was a boy, much had not. "Many of the old problems have resurfaced elsewhere in our society, under different rubrics and with different justifications. When I left Georgia over twenty-five years ago, a familiar source of the unkind treatment and incivility were just bigots." At this point, Thomas's cadence picked up, and his face turned into the grim mask that became so familiar during his confirmation hearings. "Today, ironically, a new brand of stereotypes and ad hominem assaults are surfacing across the nation's college campuses, in the national media, in Hollywood, and among the involuntarily ordained 'cultural élite.' " The phrase "cultural élite" appeared in quotation marks in the prepared text of his speech, making plain the allusion to former Vice-President Quayle's celebrated use of it during the 1992 campaign. "Who are the targets?" Thomas asked. "Those who dare to question current social and cultural gimmicks, those who insist that we embrace the values that have worked and reject those that have failed us, those who dare to disagree with the latest ideological fad." His audience looked on,



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"Try to hang on, man! Dan Rather's on his way."

• •

hypnotized. On the relatively rare occasions when Supreme Court Justices give formal speeches, they tend to steer well clear of controversial topics—but not, obviously, Clarence Thomas. Who are the targets of the cultural élite? Thomas believed they included him.

Referring to his college years, he continued, "Often I heard it said you weren't really black if you didn't wear an Afro. Though I occasionally wore my hair in this style, I certainly didn't define myself through my barber. This conformist mind-set struck me as particularly incredible since we had barely freed ourselves from being judged by others on the basis of our skin. My reaction to this was to leave my hair uncombed for most of my college career. I'm still not sure if anyone knew the difference." A ripple of nervous laughter issued from the audience. The trend intensified during the nineteen-eighties, Thomas went on. "As a black person, straying from the tenets of this orthodoxy meant that you were a traitor to your race, you were not a real black, and you would be forced to pay for your ideological trespasses, often through systematic character assassination, the modern-day version of the old public floggings. Instead of seeing signs on public doors saying 'No Coloreds Allowed,' the signs I saw were 'No Nonconforming Ideas Allowed.' "

The point here was a familiar one to anyone who had watched Thomas testify before the senators. His words in Macon represented an elaboration of what was perhaps his most famous utterance at his confirmation hearings: his denunciation of the proceedings as "a high-tech lynching for uppity blacks who in any way deign to think for themselves, to do for themselves, to have different ideas." The settings could not have been more different: an agitated congressional hearing before a polarized Senate committee, and a formal speech in a genteel Southern setting. But the themes were identical—that Thomas was the victim of a powerful liberal conspiracy that controlled (and stifled) public debate.

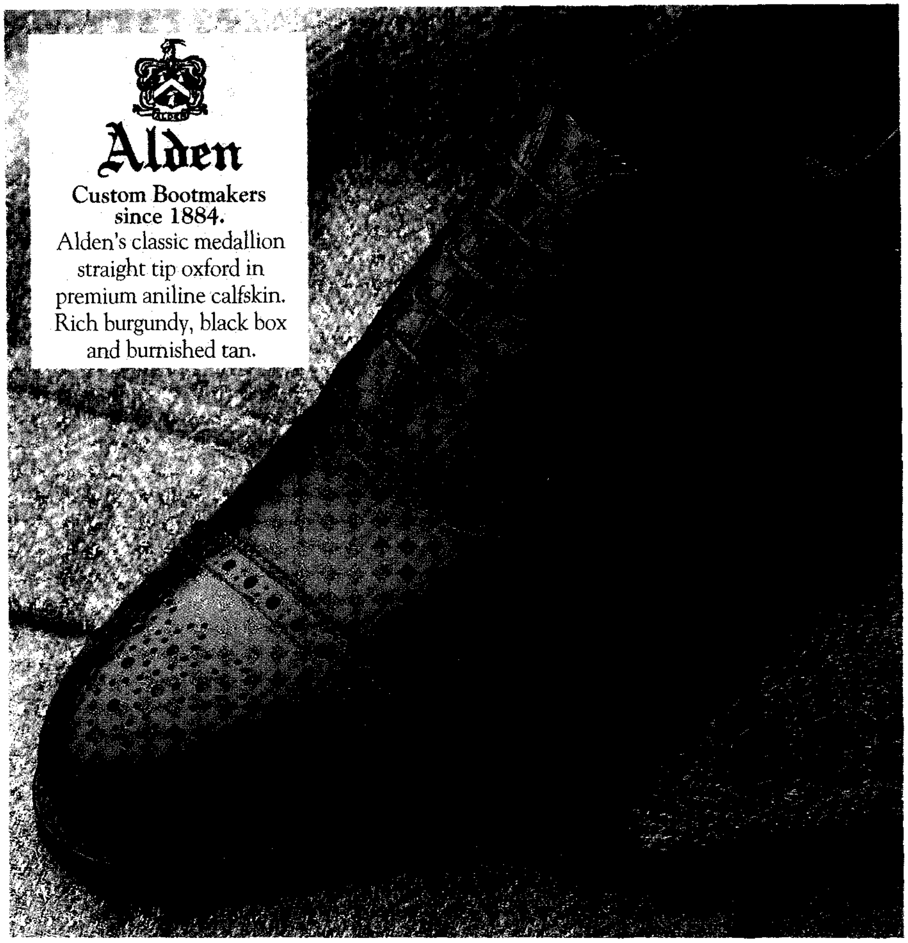
One change was that Thomas now had a name for the conspiracy. It was "what I refer to as the 'new intolerance,' " he said. It was "just as invidious and perhaps more pervasive than the incivility black Americans suffered throughout much of this century." In the new intolerance, "the jugular of the dissenter [is] vengefully slashed at. Does a man instantaneously become insensitive or a dupe or an Uncle Tom because he happens to disagree with the policy of affirmative action?" Thomas said that when he arrived in Washington, people with beliefs such as his, especially blacks, were dismissed as "sell-outs" or "insensitive" and that as a Reagan Administration official he had been called "an ultraconservative." He added—as if such addition were necessary—"Later, I would be called *worse* things."

It was time now "for regrouping and rejuvenation," he said. "As I look out in the audience today, I see hope. When I was a brash and often angry young man—I *was* angry—I would confide in my grandmother about my frustration and my dejection. She passed away ten years ago today, but I can still see her looking at me with those strong, kind, sensitive eyes. She would give me her usual sage, warm advice: 'Son, do your best, be good, be honest, and say your prayers.' I would respond, 'Yes, Ma'am!' Perhaps we all should say, 'Yes, Ma'am!' to her wise counsel and get on with the business of acting like we deserve to live in a free society." A standing ovation followed.

The lynching analogy at the heart of Thomas's speech may be an imperfect one. On the one hand are the heroes of the civil-rights movement: people who—from Martin Luther King, Jr., to the Freedom Riders—braved police nightsticks and worse so that Thomas and his contemporaries might live, vote, and travel in peace. On the other hand is Thomas: a black man whose career soared to unimagined heights solely on the patronage of two white Presidents of the United States. Thomas has, to be sure, endured tough public criticism from liberal opponents. But to go along with the suggestion that Thomas and the civil-rights protesters faced similar obstacles—and displayed comparable courage—may well be to take an unduly sympathetic view of the difficulties the Justice has faced. Still, what matters is that Thomas believes his "lynching" to have been no less unjust than the lynchings inflicted with ropes tied to tree branches. And over the past two years his votes on the Supreme Court—and his public life as a Justice—have reflected, with great precision, the grievance that simmers inside him.

On October 4th, the first Monday in October and the traditional start of the Supreme Court's term, Clarence Thomas begins his third year as a Justice. A review of his first two years—based on interviews with more than three dozen past and current Supreme Court and Court of Appeals law clerks and nearly fifty people familiar with Thomas's life and work—reveals a Justice like no other who has ever sat on the Court. Thomas's confirmation hearings are and will no doubt remain his defining moment in the national memory. In its own way, though, the story of Thomas's first two years on the Court has been no less dramatic than that of his tumultuous arrival on it.

Thomas is unique partly because his jurisprudential philosophy, as reflected in his votes and opinions, appears to be more than simply conservative: he looks well on his way to being ranked as one of the most conservative Justices of the late-twentieth century. This was foreshadowed by his service in the Reagan and Bush Administrations, when Thomas portrayed himself in his speeches as a zealot of the hard right. Confronted with those speeches during his confirmation hearings, however, Thomas dismissed them as the musings of a "part-time political theorist." As a Justice, he promised the senators, he would "strip down, like a runner, to eliminate agendas, to eliminate ideologies." Instead, in his first two years he has worn his ideological convictions like a full-length parka. Perhaps more than any other person who might have been named to the Court, Thomas repudiates everything that his predecessor, Thurgood Marshall, stood for. Thomas's every vote—even his every public utterance, written or spoken—seems designed to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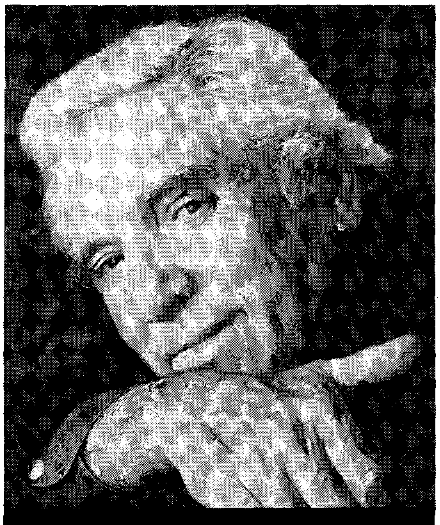
outrage the liberal establishment that so venerated Marshall.

And that, ultimately, may be Thomas's objective. At this early stage in his career, his jurisprudence seems guided to an unusual degree by raw anger. A longtime friend of his says of the hearings, "The real tragedy of this event is that his behavior on the Court has been affected. He's still damaged. He's still reeling. He was hurt more deeply than anyone could comprehend." As Thomas told his audience in Macon, anger is not a new phenomenon in his life. As a college student, he was angry about the Vietnam War and about the segregated South of his birth. As a student at Yale Law School, he was angry about the stigma that he felt affirmative action had imposed on him. And as a rising young Republican, he seethed with anger at the scorn of the liberal establishment. But none of these previous grievances compare with what he felt about the hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. In response, he appears to have embarked on a bold effort to change the perception of what constitutes the appropriate public role of a Supreme Court Justice.

The effort has not been easy. Thomas's victory in the Senate—the vote of fifty-two to forty-eight, on October 15, 1991, that gave him life tenure on the Supreme Court—was a bittersweet one. Even in the tightly guarded cloister of the Supreme Court Building, Thomas was immediately forced to contend daily with the explosive impact that his hearings had had on the American people. "As a result of such enormous exposure, I'm *not* free to wander about as I did on the D.C. Circuit," Thomas told *The Docket Sheet*, the Supreme Court's internal newsletter, about five months after he took his seat. Thomas's interview with *The Docket Sheet* is the only one he has granted to any publication since he joined the Court. (He declined my interview request.) "I used to love to walk out with my clerks and walk down to the Old Post Office and have barbecue or something like that or walk over to Union Station and have cheese fries or something. My total loss of anonymity has been the big change in that regard." Thomas rarely drives his beloved black Corvette with the vanity license plates to work in the morning. REZ IPZA, the plates say—a variant of the Latin legal phrase *res ipsa loquitur*, which means "The thing speaks for itself." Thomas can no longer take runs along the Mall, as he did when he was a judge on the Court of Appeals. In his first year on the Court he scarcely ever left the Supreme Court Building on foot, and that was fortunate, in one way, because it meant that he probably never saw the boldly lettered graffito on a Capitol Hill sidewalk across the street. It said, "Anita Told the Truth."

Nor was there much relief inside the Supreme Court Building. The door to Thomas's chambers was next to that of an office occupied by two of Justice Blackmun's law clerks, who, according to a former fellow Supreme Court clerk, had been appalled by Thomas's performance at the hearings. The Blackmun clerks decided to make a small—perhaps petty—protest against the new arrival. They had habitually left the door to the hallway open, but after Thomas arrived they kept it closed, so as to avoid eye contact with him when he walked the halls. "It was not a celebratory time," someone familiar with the Thomas chambers recalls. "Enough people thought he had committed perjury in the hearings so that no one wanted to celebrate." Thomas moved into his chambers less than a month before he was to hear his first oral arguments, and he had little time to do anything but prepare for them. Two of his first decorating touches on the bare walls of his new office were telling. In the entrance foyer he posted an admonition to respect the confidentiality of all Supreme Court business. On the door to his private office he put the words "Do Not Disturb."

His fellow Justices apparently did not disturb him—nor have they had much to do with him. They are cordial but distant. From the beginning, Thomas was slow to master the Court's rarefied social mores. The week he took his seat, photographs of Thomas and his wife, Virginia, graced the cover and seven inside pages of the magazine *People*. After refusing indignantly to discuss any aspect of his personal life with the Senate Judiciary Committee, he posed with his wife for a series of astonishingly intimate portraits: grinning cheek to cheek, holding hands on the plush carpet, curled up on



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the sofa reading the Bible. "A lot of people on the Court couldn't believe it," one former clerk says. "The whole *People* thing was so far off the wall that a number of them thought the issue was a parody." Near the end of Thomas's first term, Virginia Thomas organized a party at the Court for his forty-fourth birthday, and that, too, raised eyebrows. "Some of the Justices were not comfortable with how political a crowd it was," another former clerk says. "Inviting the post-disgrace Ed Meese to the Court was viewed as being in questionable taste."

Thomas has yet to develop a real friendship with any of his colleagues. John Paul Stevens and Byron White play golf together. Anthony Kennedy and Sandra Day O'Connor wander the halls together comparing fabric patterns and carpet samples as part of a project to renovate the Court's interior spaces. Antonin Scalia and William Rehnquist share a fairly regular poker game. David Souter has succeeded William Brennan as the Court's inveterate schmoozer, strolling into his colleagues' chambers and gently lobbying for his positions. And Thomas's newest colleague, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, is an old friend of Scalia's. Thomas is, for the most part, left alone. As an old friend of his says, "Clarence's description of the Court is as an extremely businesslike, almost cold place. His colleagues are not going to talk to him in a way that will help him heal. You're not going to be baring your soul to them over a beer. You need friends. The only person he sees, the only person he can really talk to, is his wife."

And Virginia Thomas remains as bitter as her husband about his confirmation hearings. A thirty-six-year-old lawyer, she was a deputy assistant secretary in the Labor Department under President Bush and was an outspoken conservative in her own right. Currently, the couple's life appears to be one of shared, brooding isolation. After Thomas was confirmed, they moved to an expensive new development in a Virginia suburb nearly an hour away from Washington. They live there alone, Thomas's son, from a previous marriage, having gone off to college. They commute into the city together, leaving the house shortly after dawn. Thomas's appointment to the Supreme Court "interfered with her freedom to express herself the way she really wants to," he told *The Docket Sheet*. "She has had to learn how to live with that and be more constrained. Because she has strong opinions on things. Not with me and my work, but just politically—and I think that she loves a debate and she loves the fight and I think it has really constrained her."

Yet Virginia Thomas remains in the thick of the fight, if behind the scenes. Since early this year, she has worked as a policy analyst for the House Republican Conference. One of her responsibilities seems an almost eerie echo of her husband's ordeal: She monitors the Clinton White House on ethics. Her mission is to identify and research issues, such as the dismissals in the White House travel office, that can be exploited for the Republicans' political gain. "She always wants to bring the battle to the Democrats," a congressional aide who has worked with Mrs. Thomas says. "She's kind of quiet but always wants to go the extra mile. She takes detailed notes on every meeting she goes to, types them up, and then uses them to make sure things get followed up." Mrs. Thomas is passionate in her politics, and, in her husband's battle, she transcended even her usual devotion to the cause. In the interview she gave to *People* which accompanied the photographs, she said that the confirmation fight "was not the normal political battle. It was spiritual warfare. Good versus evil."

To those on Thomas's side in that battle, he and his wife have been supremely grateful. He, in particular, is a devoted friend. "I broke up with my fiancée last November," Armstrong Williams, who was Thomas's confidential assistant from 1983 to 1987, when he was chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, says. "This is the kind of friend Justice Thomas is: he called me every day for twelve straight days to see that I was doing all right." Clint Bolick, a prominent Washington conservative, who also worked for Thomas at the E.E.O.C., asked Thomas to be godfather to a son, born in 1988. "I asked him because I can't think of anyone who has as strict a moral code—or who is as loyal—as he is," Bolick says. Autographing a photograph for Christopher Brewster, another fellow-aide to Senator John Danforth, Justice Thomas

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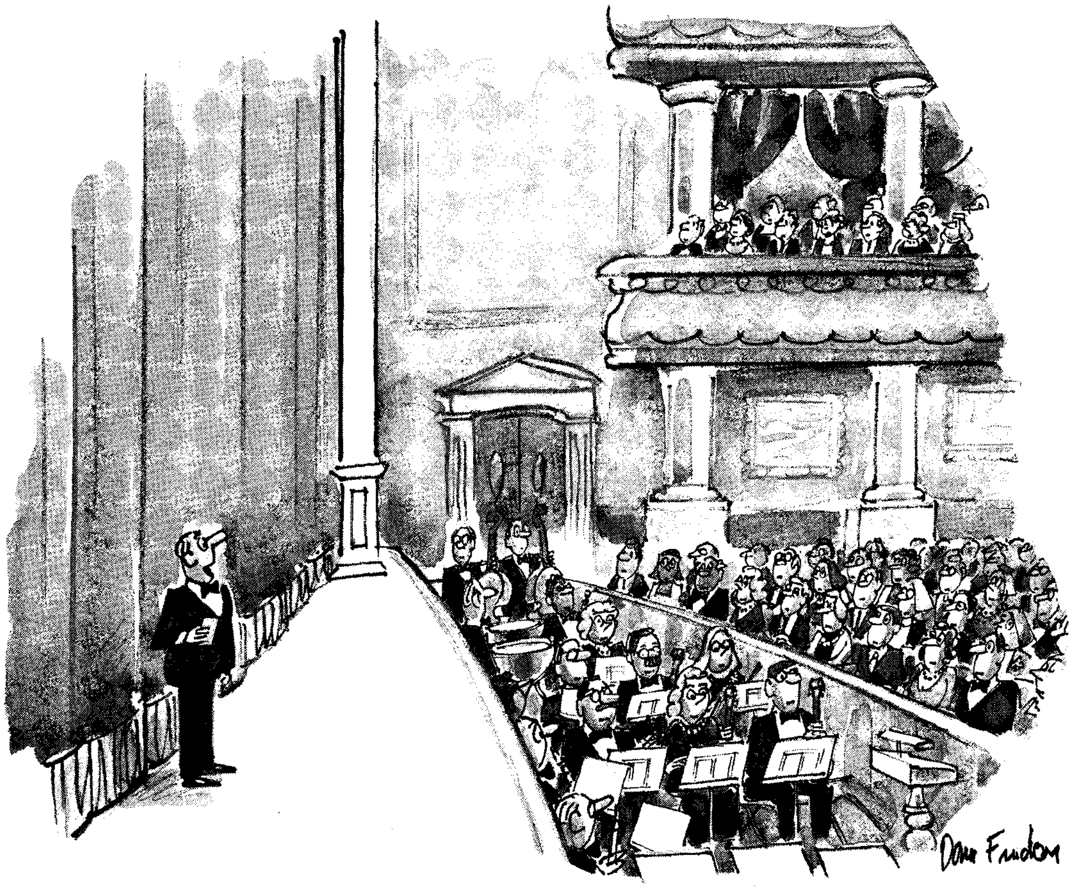
wrote, "I hope I can be as good a friend to you as you have been to me."

THE conservative activists who fought most fervently for Thomas's confirmation are the people to whom Thomas is most grateful. And it is with them that he is attempting to redefine the role of the Justice; for, though he has spoken out only on rare occasions and in carefully chosen settings before specially selected audiences, he remains an important voice (and symbol) in the American conservative movement. Thomas believes that if the "new intolerance" is to be defeated—and if the liberal establishment that vilified him is ever to be called to account—the impetus will have to come from the New Right conservative movement, which has long been his political home.

In his effort, Thomas's mentor has been Paul Weyrich, a Washington fixture known as a founding father of the New Right and as the man who helped coin the name for Reverend Jerry Falwell's political organization, the Moral Majority. In nearly three decades in the capital, Weyrich has founded about a dozen organizations, including the Heritage and the Free Congress foundations, in the fight for what he calls "cultural conservatism"—an agenda that has anti-abortion and pro-school-prayer tenets as its bedrock. In the early days of the Reagan Administration, Weyrich's causes also included the ill-fated effort to preserve tax breaks for racially segregated schools. Weyrich and Thomas met in the early eighties, while Thomas was chairman of the E.E.O.C. Though they remain good friends, Weyrich was cryptic in describing their relationship to me. "I see him fairly frequently," he said. "We've been to each other's homes." Weyrich has watched and helped guide his friend's ideological development over the years. "He has changed somewhat in his perspective," Weyrich said. "He was very focussed on economic issues, as many Reaganites were when they came into office. He now sees that the cultural focus is very valid. He's said he thinks we were ahead of the curve."

As a Justice, Thomas's work on behalf of the New Right has been varied. While he was in Georgia in May, he spoke at a fund-raising dinner in Atlanta for the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, which is a sort of state-level version of Heritage or Free Congress and describes itself as "Georgia's conservative voice." He has also paid at least three visits to the headquarters of the Free Congress Foundation, on Capitol Hill. In the weeks immediately after his confirmation, Thomas made only one public appearance: On November 19, 1991, he spoke on National Empowerment Television, a satellite network that Weyrich uses to beam programs to his followers around the country. Seated beside Weyrich, Thomas addressed an audience of conservative activists. "We would like to thank everyone," the Justice said, "and indicate to everyone out there, everyone in this room, around the country, the deep, deep gratitude that we have for the way that you stood up for us and the love that you showed for us. And I mean that on the deepest, most personal level." The following spring, Weyrich and his colleagues held a surprise birthday party for Thomas, and in April of this year Thomas returned to Weyrich's television studio to speak at a fifteenth-anniversary tribute to the Free Congress Foundation and its founder.



"Because of illness, the role of Mimì in tonight's performance will be sung by a temp."

That broadcast, on the night of April 26, 1993, provides a rare glimpse of the milieu in which Thomas spends much of his time off the Court. He arrived at the studio just before the master of ceremonies for the evening, Mark Larson, opened the festivities, in front of an artist's rendering of the White House and the Capitol dome.

"What a night! What a room! What a show!" Larson, a gregarious radio-talk-show host from San Diego, said. "We're here in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., the leader in paperwork since 1933—but who's keeping track?" Bantering with the celebrators packed tightly in the studio, Larson continued, "If there's any breaking news during tonight's show, I will keep you up to date on those news tidbits right here. Now, for example, there was news today with the Bill Clinton–

John F. Kennedy connection—you know, trying to get all the mannerisms down and the whole bit. Today, while most of you were busy doing other things, Bill Clinton, attempting to emulate J.F.K.'s 'I am a Berliner' speech, said, and we quote, '*Ich bin ein wiener.*' "

Much laughter.

"Now," Larson said, moments later, "we will get to what is a real special time for those of you watching around the country and certainly for us here. We have special famous friends of N.E.T. and Free Congress here. This first guest is a special surprise guest. . . . Justice Clarence Thomas is here, ladies and gentlemen, from the United States Supreme Court!"

The studio audience applauded enthusiastically as Thomas, already on crutches from his basketball accident, squeezed past Larson to make his way to his designated position in front of the camera. As Thomas hobbled by, Larson quipped, "I know what people are thinking right now: Boy, the Committee was really tough with those hearings, and now this. . . ." As Thomas settled into place, Larson said, "She just won't let up, will she?"

She just won't let up, will she? There was no need to use the name. Even two years later, even in front of the Justice's friends, Anita Hill remained the ever-present "she" in Clarence Thomas's life.

Thomas replied graciously to Larson's joke, "Actually, I prefer this injury to being before the Committee." He got a relieved laugh from the crowd. Then the Justice said, "It's just good to be able to amble over here, though, to celebrate this wonderful evening, this wonderful event. Fifteen years is hard to believe. One of the things I can say about Paul and Free Congress and all my friends over here is that in this city, where friends are hard to come by, when times are good your friends know you. When times are bad, you know your friends. And I got to know these friends when times were bad. So it's with deepness and with a sense of gratitude, and sense of loyalty and friendship, that I congratulate Free Congress and all my friends here."

The remainder of the evening's program included tributes to Weyrich and Free Congress from, among others, Senator Jesse Helms, of North Carolina; the talk-show host Rush Limbaugh; and retired Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, the all but declared candidate for the Senate from Virginia.

In recent history, this sort of political activity is unprecedented for a Supreme Court Justice. Canon 5 of the Code of Judicial Conduct holds that a judge "should not be a speaker or the guest of honor at an organization's fund-raising events," and Canon 7 states that a judge should not "make speeches for a political organization." It is one of the quirks of the federal judiciary, however, that the Code is binding on lower-court judges but, technically, does not apply to Supreme Court Justices. (The Judicial Conference of the United States, the rule-making body of mostly lower-court judges which adopted the Code, has never seen fit to impose rules on the Justices, who stand above them in the judicial hierarchy.) The only formal rules binding Supreme Court Justices, under the Constitution, are that they maintain

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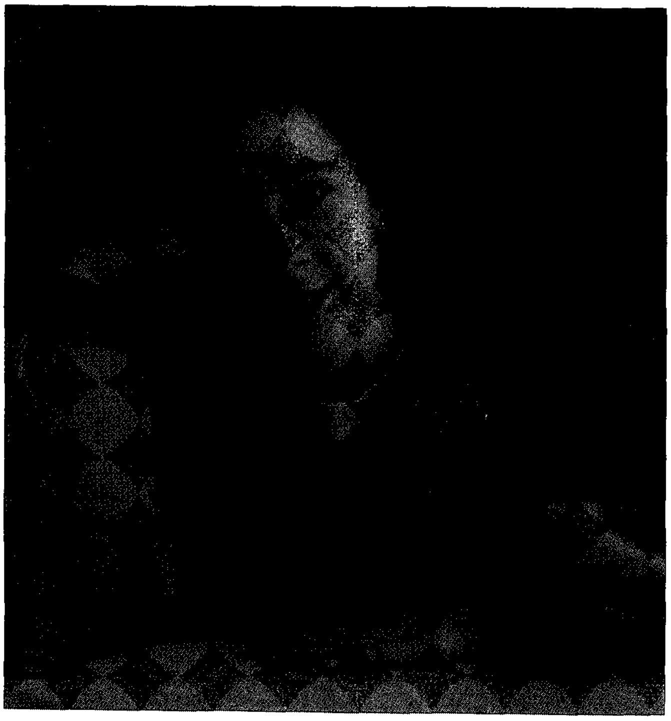

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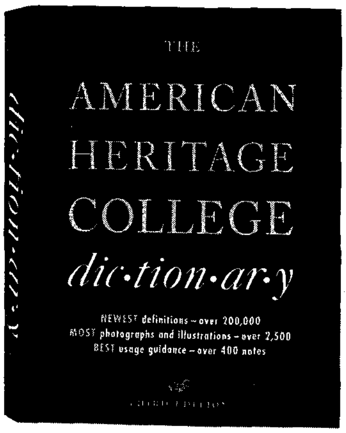
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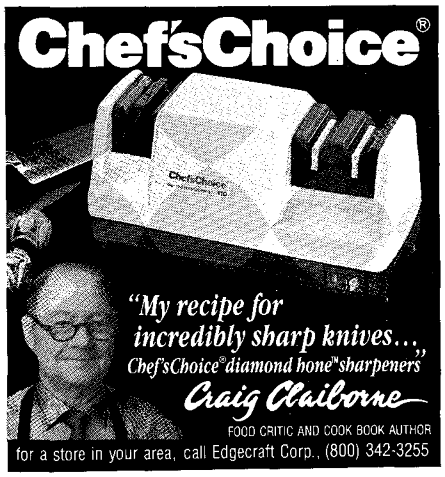

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"good Behaviour" and refrain from the "high Crimes and Misdemeanors" that can result in impeachment by Congress. Toni House, the Supreme Court spokeswoman, recently said, however, "The Justices do follow the Code of Judicial Conduct even though it doesn't apply to them. They adhere to it, and take it very seriously."

Notwithstanding these rules, Thomas shows every sign of accelerating, rather than moderating, his political activity. On October 1st, the Friday before this year's Supreme Court term begins, he is scheduled to make an appearance at the national convention of Concerned Women for America, in Washington. C.W.A., which was founded in 1979 by Beverly LaHaye, is one of the most outspoken conservative organizations in the nation—and one that strongly backed Thomas's confirmation. It now claims six hundred thousand members, and lobbies in Washington and in state capitals for restrictive abortion laws and school prayer, and against homosexual rights and sex education. A letter-writing campaign that C.W.A. conducted in 1988 and 1989 is often credited with persuading the major television networks not to run condom commercials. "Anti-family, anti-Christian, and anti-life coalitions propelled Clinton to the presidency," a recent C.W.A. fund-raising appeal asserted. "Now, we must put them on notice that the C.W.A. membership will fight for what is morally right with every resource we have." At the convention, according to a promotional brochure, Justice Thomas will share "a challenging message from his heart exclusively for C.W.A."

C.W.A. plays an active role in the courts, and especially the Supreme Court. A feature called "From the Bench" in C.W.A.'s magazine, *Family Voice*, regularly recounted the efforts of the organization's lawyers to advance its agenda. In last year's Supreme Court term, the former C.W.A. "general legal counsel" Jay Alan Sekulow argued two major cases before Thomas and his colleagues. In one, he persuaded the Court that a civil-rights statute could not be used to restrain the abortion-clinic protests by Operation Rescue. In the other, he successfully argued that a public-school district had to allow a church group to show one of its films on the grounds of a public school. C.W.A., supporting Sekulow's arguments, submitted friend-of-the-court briefs, and Thomas voted in favor of the C.W.A. position in both cases.

"Justice Thomas's speech to the convention will not be open to the press," Lynn Rosenberg, the C.W.A. convention coördinator, told me, "because he just wants it to be among his friends."

THE heart of Thomas's strategy for striking back at his liberal critics is, of course, to utilize the Supreme Court itself. And he has made his law clerks—the four recent law-school graduates who assist him in his chambers—a critical part of his effort.

Thomas also appears to have been more than usually dependent on his clerks. He had been a judge on the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit for less than two years when he became a member of the Supreme Court. At the time of his nomination to the Court, he had written only twenty opinions in his judicial career, all in routine cases. The number of opinions was about average for a judge of his tenure, but tiny in comparison with the numbers written by other judges who have been named to the Court. (Ginsburg wrote four hundred and five opinions on the same Court of Appeals.) Before he became a federal judge, he had never argued a single case in federal court. Indeed, before he joined the D.C. Circuit his entire career as a litigator consisted of serving his first two and a half years out of law school as an entry-level lawyer on the staff of the Missouri Attorney General.

As it turned out, the new Justice relied on one law clerk in particular—Christopher Landau, who had worked in the Bush Justice Department, then clerked for Thomas on the Court of Appeals, and then spent a year as a clerk for Justice Scalia. Other former Supreme Court clerks say that Thomas, exhausted from his confirmation ordeal, gave Landau enormous authority in his chambers, both in the drafting of opinions and in the selection of his fellow and subsequent law clerks. "Thomas came from the executive branch, where people have chiefs of staff," one former clerk says. "That may be what he was looking for with Chris." As Landau was not shy about telling his fellow-clerks, Thomas relied on him a great deal. Another former clerk recalls, "It got to the point where clerks were referring, in front of their Justices, to 'the Landau vote' on the Court."

According to the person familiar with the Thomas chambers, Landau was a member of the Federalist Society, a fraternal group of conservative lawyers, and he chose three other Federalist members as his fellow-clerks. (In a recent letter to this magazine, Landau denies being a Federalist member.) Word quickly went around the Supreme Court that this first group of four was probably the most conservative group ever assembled to work for a single Justice. The source also says that the group "considered it a compliment." Consequently, disagreements among them—and with their boss—were rare. There was essentially no discussion in the Thomas chambers, this person says, of Planned Parenthood v. Casey, the most celebrated case of Thomas's first term. In Casey, the Justices were asked to rule whether Roe v. Wade, the Court's epochal 1973 decision establishing a woman's right to choose abortion, should be overturned. In his confirmation hearings, Thomas had said, "I cannot remember personally engaging in" any discussions of Roe v. Wade. Since it was the most famous Supreme Court case of his generation, this statement drew widespread skepticism at the time. In any event, it appears clear that Thomas had made up his mind about the fate of Roe before he arrived on the Court; without even discussing the issue with his law clerks, he decided that the case should be overturned. "There was no point in talking about Casey," the source says. "There was no doubt whatsoever on where he was coming out. There was no discussion at all." Thomas joined Justice Scalia's dissenting opinion, which urged that Roe be overturned.

Other former Supreme Court clerks say Landau drafted the opinion in the case for which Thomas remains best known—that of Hudson v. McMillian, in which Keith Hudson, a black inmate of a Louisiana prison, sued his guards for a 1983 beating they had inflicted on him while he was shackled. Seven Justices felt that Hudson had been subjected to cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of the Eighth Amendment, and that the eight-hundred-dollar damage award he won in the trial court should be upheld. But Thomas and Scalia believed that Hudson was entitled to nothing, because he had not suffered a "significant injury." The dissenting opinion that Landau drafted for Thomas in the Hudson case is as notable for its airy, dismissive tone as for its harsh conclusion. Thomas's entire description of the injuries suffered by Hudson was that they were "minor." (According to the judge who tried the case, he had suffered bruises and swelling in the face, mouth, and lip, loosened teeth, and a cracked dental plate.) "Surely prison was not a more congenial place in the early years of the Republic than it is today," the opinion noted, yet in those days, it pointed out, courts "routinely rejected prisoner grievances by explaining that the courts had no role in regulating prison life." The opinion concluded with a rousing peroration, which was extraordinary in that it responded to an opinion for the majority, written by Justice O'Connor, that was notably low-key and restrained. O'Connor's opinion, Thomas said, had expanded the cruel-and-unusual-punishment clause "beyond all bounds of history and precedent" and was "yet another manifestation of the pervasive view that the Federal Constitution must address all ills in our society. . . . The Eighth Amendment is not, and should not be turned into, a National Code of Prison Regulation." One former clerk says of the opinion, "It was such a phenomenally aggressive position for him to be taking so early in his tenure. When that opinion came out, people were sitting there with their mouths hanging open."

That may well have been the point. Thomas's Hudson dissent reads like a deliberate provocation—a thumb in the eye of the liberal establishment. On and off the Court, the pillars of that establishment responded as Thomas might have predicted. Justice Blackmun expressed his distress by writing an impassioned opinion concurring with the majority. He noted that, in Thomas's interpretation, prison officials might not be constrained from "lashing prisoners with leather straps, whipping them with rubber hoses, beating them with naked fists, shocking them with electric currents, asphyxiating them short of death, intentionally exposing them to undue heat or cold, or forcibly injecting them with psychosis-inducing drugs" as long as these punishments were "ingeniously

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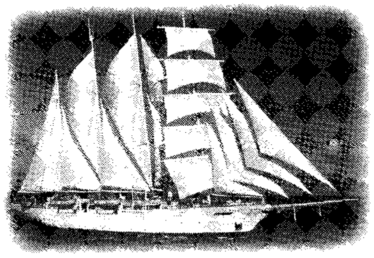

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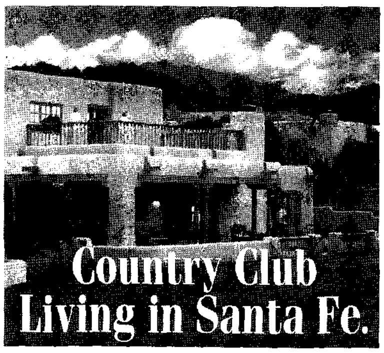

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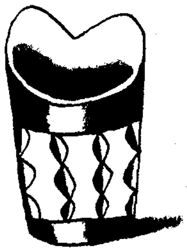
designed to cause pain but without a telltale 'significant injury.' " The press, too, responded vigorously to Thomas's opinion. A *Times* editorial entitled "The Youngest, Cruelest Justice" recalled caustically that in his confirmation hearings Thomas had "testified poignantly about watching busloads of prisoners from his window. 'I say to myself almost every day, there but for the grace of God go I,' he told senators eager to believe him." In their columns Mary McGrory called the dissent "disgusting" and William Raspberry labelled it "bizarre." But Thomas, far from being discouraged by the reaction to the opinion, didn't seem to mind the abuse at all. "He really doesn't care what the mainstream liberal media thinks of him," the person familiar with his chambers says. "It is unimaginable that Clarence Thomas could be affected by a New York *Times* editorial." A *Wall Street Journal* article on Thomas noted that Justices who move from right to center are often said to be "evolving," and that Thomas liked to tell his clerks, "I ain't evolving!"



Indeed he is not. The Hudson case turned out to be a harbinger. During his first year, his votes continued to be exceptionally—and without exception—conservative. Prior to his appointment, Thomas was not known to have well-established views on many of the most controversial constitutional issues of the day, such as freedom of speech and the separation of church and state. On almost all of them he has come down on Justice Scalia's side. According to statistics compiled by the *Harvard Law Review* for the 1991 Court term, Thomas voted with Scalia 85.9 per cent of the time, which was more than any other two Justices voted together that year. One of his few deviations from this voting pattern is a curious one, in the light of Anita Hill's testimony that Thomas was interested in pornography. Over Chris Landau's strong objection (according to former Supreme Court clerks)—and in spite of Scalia's vote to the contrary—Thomas voted to reverse the conviction of a man who had been charged with receiving child pornography through the mail, on the ground that he had been entrapped.

Thomas's strong rightward inclination continued the following year; in fact, his votes and opinions became, if anything, more conservative. A prominent voice among Thomas's law clerks in the second year was Laura Ingraham, who first made her name in the mid-eighties as an undergraduate at Dartmouth, where she was a staffer and then the editor-in-chief of the weekly *Dartmouth Review*, which was then in its incendiary heyday. The *Review* was founded in 1980 and quickly won a national reputation for reckless right-wing advocacy. Its pet causes were opposition to affirmative action and gay rights, and Ingraham was at the heart of several of its most notorious controversies—as when she described a black professor as "a lean, scruffy fellow," quoted a student's comparison of him to a "used Brillo pad," and asserted that "some allege" that the "goodly number" of black students in the professor's class were " 'affirmative action' kids looking for a course they can handle." As editor-in-chief of the *Review*, Ingraham assigned a reporter to attend and secretly tape a meeting of the Gay Students Association, ostensibly because the G.S.A. refused to disclose to the *Review* how it spent its eight-hundred-and-twenty-five-dollar subsidy from the college. (Ingraham's career at the *Review* also won her a small footnote in literary history. She was at one time romantically involved with a *Review* colleague, Dinesh D'Souza, and he dedicated the hardcover edition of his best-selling attack on political correctness, "Illiberal Education," to her. They later broke up, and the paperback includes no dedication.) After she graduated, in 1985, Ingraham worked in the Department of Education and then at the White House for Gary Bauer, President Reagan's designated emissary to the New Right. At the University of Virginia School of Law, law-school classmates recall, she lowered her profile but remained a notable presence, if only because of her vanity license plate: FAR RITE. The person familiar with Thomas's chambers says, "The Justice likes Laura because she's a fighter."

In that second year, Thomas started to make clearer his views on the explosive issue that is at the core of his enduring rage over the confirmation hearings and indeed his world view—race. "Thomas is different from the white conservatives," the source familiar with Thomas's chambers says. "They think race shouldn't matter, and that you should just judge people outside of the color of their skin. Thomas disagrees. He feels that race matters very much. He believes you've got to fight for your dignity while understanding that a lot of people are racists." Thomas made the point last term with a characteristic burst of anger. In a concurring opinion, he took a shot at the lawyers who first called the Court's attention to the racially discriminatory way the death penalty is administered in this country. According to one famous study, a person accused of killing a white was 4.3 times more likely to be sentenced to death than a person accused of killing a black, and a black accused of killing a white was most likely to receive the death sentence. Yet Thomas dismissed the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.—that pillar of the civil-rights establishment where Thurgood Marshall practiced law for so many years—as a "small number of ambitious lawyers and academics." The sting of that characterization was even greater because Thomas issued the opinion on January 25, 1993, the day after Marshall died. But Thomas's point in the case—Graham v. Collins—cannot be so easily dismissed. In the opinion he expressed his support for criminal laws that carry mandatory death-penalty provisions. Since 1976, the Supreme Court has held that all such statutes are unconstitutional—that juries must always deliberate separately on guilt and punishment. The Court had struck down the statutes in part because it felt that defendants who are found guilty should always be allowed to present "mitigating" evidence to the jury. Such mitigating evidence might include a defendant's youth, poverty, mental disability, or lack of a prior record. But, as Thomas sees it, allowing sentencers the discretion to consider such evidence is a sham. Just as such evidence "may allow the sentencer to express benevolence," Thomas wrote in the Graham case, "it may allow him to cloak latent animus. A judgment that some will consider a 'moral response' may secretly be based on caprice or even outright prejudice." Racial hostility, as Thomas sees it, is ubiquitous and unavoidable, and he believes the law should reflect that reality.

In Thomas's view, blacks should acknowledge white hostility and triumph in spite of it—and worry less about integrating white institutions and persuading whites to change their ways. The contrast here with Marshall, perhaps the archetypal integrationist, is profound. Marshall devoted much of his career on the Supreme Court, for example, to an effort to end peremptory challenges in criminal cases. Peremptory challenges allow the prosecution and defense to strike jurors from the jury pool without giving a reason. As Marshall never tired of pointing out, prosecutors invariably used these challenges to eliminate black jurors in cases with black defendants. But in his concurring opinion in Georgia v. McCollum, Thomas turned that logic on its head. Peremptory challenges actually *protect* blacks, he asserted, because they also allow black defendants to strike white jurors. "Conscious and unconscious racism persists in our society," he wrote, and "it may influence some juries. Common experience and common sense confirm this understanding." Thomas's well-known aversion to affirmative action springs from the same feelings. According to the source familiar with Thomas's chambers, "He sees affirmative action as paternalistic and grounded in liberal condescension to blacks—like they need the white man to help them do what they can't do themselves." This view was in evidence when, in his first year on the Court, Thomas wrote a concurring opinion in a case about continued state support for historically black colleges and universities. His opinion was a paean to those institutions and their unique place in Southern history. "It would be ironic, to say the least," he wrote, "if the institutions that sustained blacks during segregation were themselves destroyed in an effort to combat its vestiges." Thomas's interest in this subject was more than just academic. "Thomas grew up right near Savannah State, which was the historically black college he would have gone to if he hadn't gotten a scholarship to Holy Cross," the source says. "It was an élite school at one point, but Thomas felt it was decimated by integration."

ONE fact repeated in almost everything written about Clarence Thomas is that he no longer reads newspapers. This is only partly true, however. He has, for the most part, stopped read-

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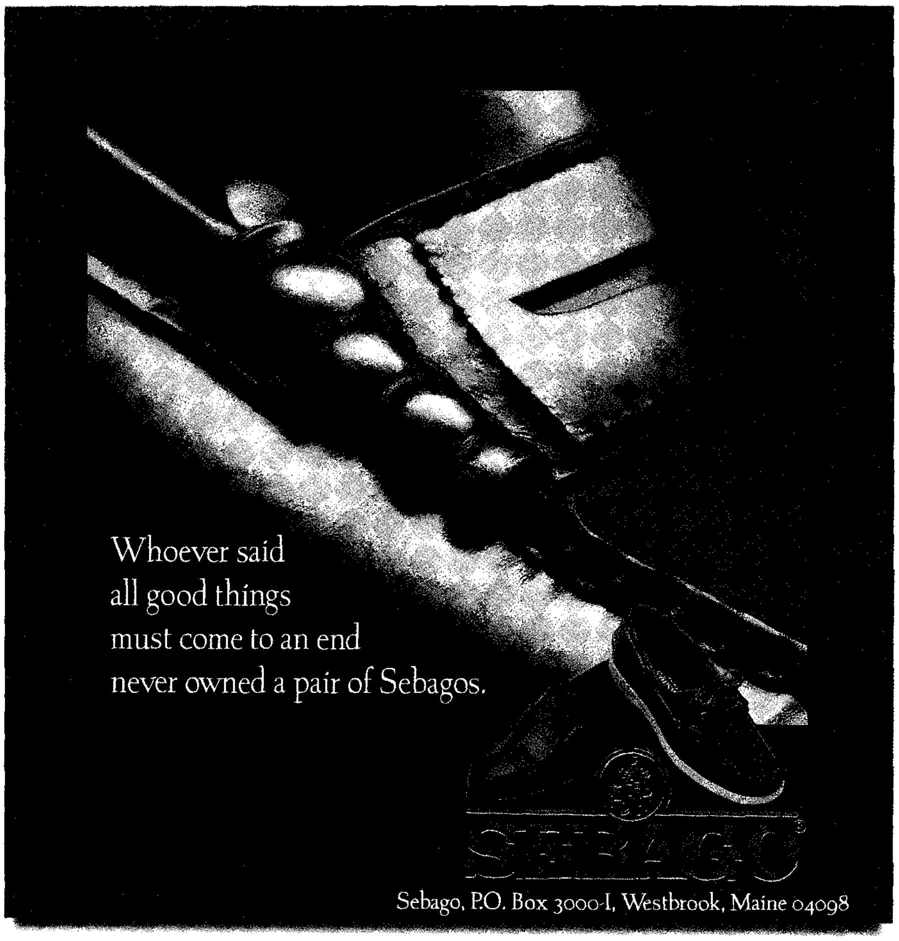

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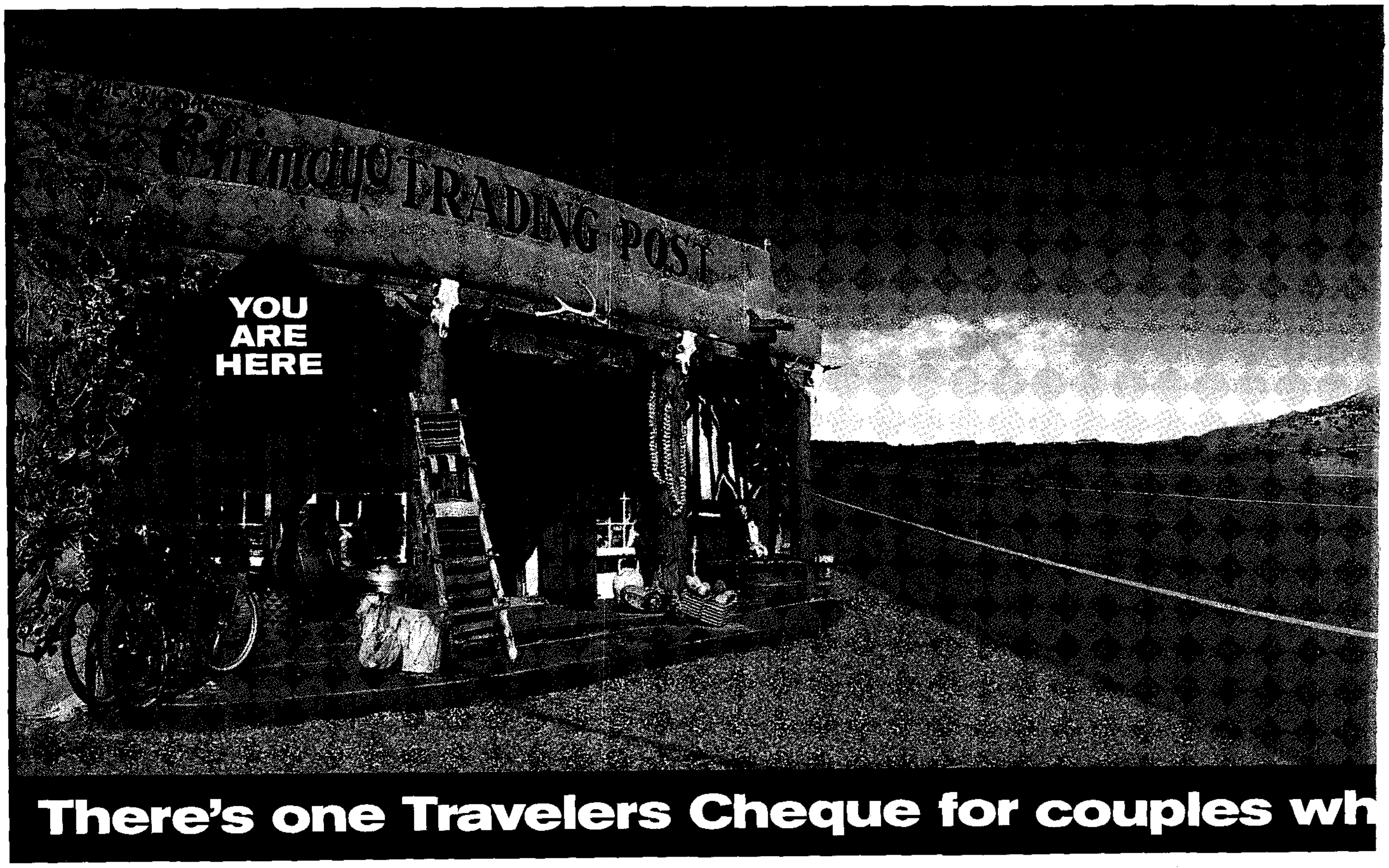
ing the *Times* and the Washington *Post*. His former aide Clint Bolick recalls Thomas's saying, "One of the happiest days of my life was when I cancelled my Washington *Post* subscription." But Thomas remains well versed in the ebb and flow of political Washington. For one thing, the person familiar with Thomas's chambers says, his wife is an avid reader of the Washington *Times*, the conservative daily owned by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's organization, and "Thomas is always very well informed about what's on the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page." Indeed, Thomas called Bolick to congratulate him shortly after his op-ed pieces in the *Journal* helped precipitate the downfall of Thomas's law-school classmate Lani Guinier, whom President Clinton had nominated to head the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

Thomas also made something of a study of press reactions to his confirmation hearings. He loathed most of the coverage—it is what caused him to stop reading the *Times* and the *Post*—but, as a friend remembers, he felt that one article in particular captured the essence of his confrontation with Anita Hill. It appeared in *Reason*, an eclectic monthly of generally libertarian orientation, in February, 1992, under the title "Native Son." It was written by Edith Efron, a veteran conservative social critic. "Read it," Thomas told the friend, "and you'll understand."

Efron began by reciting what she regarded as instances of patronizing treatment that Thomas received from the senators in his confirmation hearings. But, in the key section of the article, she mined one nugget from Thomas's past which had been largely ignored in press coverage of him. It was an interview with Thomas that had appeared in *Reason* while he was head of the E.E.O.C. Thomas had been asked, "Are there any writers who were really influential to you when you were young, and still are?" He had been unequivocal in his reply. "Richard Wright," he said. "I would have to put him number 1, numero uno. Both 'Native Son' and 'Black Boy' really woke me up. He captures a lot of the feelings that I had inside that you learn how to repress." Efron wrote, "Wanting very much to understand this man who had been stereotyped out of existence and who was controlling a violent anger at what was happening to him, I reread 'Native Son.' . . . One finds many things relevant to Thomas and to his roots and his lifelong concerns in this book."

"Native Son," which was published in 1940, is the story of another Thomas—Bigger Thomas, a defiant and, above all, angry young man who would today be called a member of the underclass. Hired as a chauffeur for a wealthy white couple, Bigger accidentally suffocates their daughter while she is drunk. In a panicked effort to cover up his deed, he incinerates her body, cutting off her head so that she will fit through the furnace door. As Efron summarizes the plot: "One lie leads to another, one crime to another, and eventually the young Bigger Thomas becomes the object of a 5,000-man police hunt that combs every inch of the segregated slum in which he is trapped. Eventually he is caught; he is defended by two white communists; their efforts fail; and Big-



ger is found guilty—guilty, above all, of the two crimes he has not committed, the rape and murder of the white girl."

The heart of "Native Son" is the false accusation of rape, and the motif of black sexuality—as it is imagined by whites and experienced by blacks—runs like an electric current through the book. Efron quotes Bigger's reaction when he reads that he is to be charged with raping a white woman: "To hint that he had committed a sex crime was to pronounce a death sentence; it meant a wiping out of his life even before he was captured; it meant death before death came, for the white men who read those words would at once kill him in their hearts." Bigger's rage coils and spins out of control as he careers toward his certain doom. In another passage quoted by Efron, the police demand that he "show us how you raped and murdered that girl." He protests, "I didn't rape her."

"Aw, come on. What you got to lose now? Show us what you did."

"I don't want to."

"You *have* to!"

"I *don't* have to!"

"Well, we'll *make* you!"

"You can't make me do nothing but die!"

In one excruciating moment during his confirmation hearings, when Senator Hatch asked Thomas if he wanted to withdraw his name from nomination, Thomas answered, "I would rather die than withdraw. If they're going to kill me, they're going to kill me." Of that remark, Efron writes, "Somewhere inside Clarence Thomas was the unmistakable voice of Bigger Thomas, refusing in extremis to submit to the white man's power: 'You can't make me do nothing but die!'" It is Efron's thesis that the confirmation hearings were merely a modern-day version of "Native Son"—that the stereotype of the oversexed black male, which sent Bigger to his death, was resurrected to humiliate Clarence Thomas before the senators. "And it would be salutary for all of us to realize that every single day that this particular justice sits on that Court will be a silent requiem for Bigger Thomas, the fictional slum boy of 50 years ago who is engraved on Clarence Thomas's heart," she writes. Efron is reluctant to draw conclusions about what all this means for Clarence Thomas the Justice, though she pronounces herself "glad" that he was confirmed. Understandably, however, Efron's reading of the book is selective. She ignores one key aspect of the plot of "Native Son," which does not fit her sympathetic analysis: Bigger's rape and murder of his girlfriend, Bessie, who is, like Anita Hill, a black woman.

Still, Thomas's first two years on the Court make Efron look like a prophet. The rippling rage that the world saw on display before the Senate Judiciary Committee—which was Bigger's anger, too—seems to churn within the Justice today and is likely to remain with him during the decades he will presumably serve on the Supreme Court. He ain't evolving. "Considering what he went through to get to the Court, he plans to take his shoes off and make himself right at home," Armstrong Williams, Thomas's friend and former assistant at the E.E.O.C., says. "He never wants the world to forget the price he paid to get there." ♦

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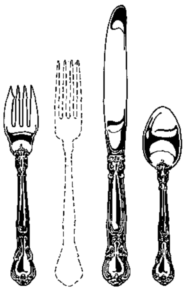

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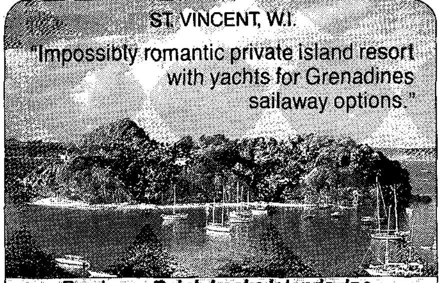

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CASUAL

THE FRANKEST INTERVIEW YET

BY IAN FRAZIER

A: I was having sex. I had had sex previously, found that I enjoyed it, and so was having it again. With a sexual partner, I screwed all over the floor. Orgasms were multiple for the both of us. I took a lover, also. Plus I had a tryst with a fellow in the shower room of the old Grand Avenue Y. I turned an empty office at work into a snuggery, and made use of it. I became proficient not only in standard English, but also in tavern English. I cursed like a sailor or sometimes like a navvy. I mixed obscenities with profanities at will when the spirit moved me, using anatomical and physiological terms, inferences of parentage, and blasphemies. When called upon, I could turn the air blue.

Oral sex.

See what I mean? I did not (and do not) shrink from explicit language. If you are shocked, or perhaps are feeling ambivalent about what I am saying, good. Sexual practices should be more open, and no one knows this better than I. When the young shopgirls in their sheer blouses and blank faces come ankling into the elevator, my expression turns unmistakably sensual. I simply drip with sex. It oozes from my every pore, which I like, and they do, too. And when I see a strapping young hoss of a guy the experience is remarkably similar. I wiggle like a streetwalker and go right up to him and say, "Hello, my name is Mr. Bascom." I garden in the near-nude in the residential community where I live. I put on a pair of coveralls only when the weather is chilly or I'm doing landscaping. If my neighbors are offended, they shouldn't be. I have an excellent, heavyset body. We are all deeply sexual beings.

I met a young woman with a criterion figure and bedroom eyes at a sales event the other day. I mentally undressed her, then re-dressed her. She noticed the pertinacious quality of my stare, and asked, "What are you looking at, Mr. Johnsberry?" I mumbled a pleasantry and looked away. She knew as well as I did that if we wanted, we could screw. I could tell she was appraising me, wondering what I'd be like in the sack, and if I was a swordsman. I wouldn't have been at all surprised if she had a mental image of me bare-butt naked. So much the better. I informed her that my name was Mr. Bemis, and that I would very much enjoy her company in my hotel suite later in the evening. We began chatting. The sexual tension, undercurrents, and electricity in the air were so thick you could have seen them, while our colleagues leered at us with a casual knowingness.

Her name was Ms. Buxbaum, and Christ, what a great lay she turned out to be! After the obligatory postcoital cigarette, I immediately went to church and confessed my sins and was shriven for them, the peace of divine forgiveness filling me as I bent over the prayer rail in my fellow-congregants' holy, homely scent of soap and dry-cleaned wool and Sunday shoe polish. By the renewed light of the high chancel windows I signed my name, Mr. Randsworthy, in the registry. Then it was back to the hotel. My lover at the time was a male nurse, and you know how nurses are. He was lithe, sloe-eyed, and rather matter-of-fact about sex, as are many young men who work in hospitals. We discovered a mutual pursuit that gave us enormous pleasure: screwing our heads off.

Yes, I believe in lap dancing. Far from censuring it, I wholeheartedly encourage it as a healthy outlet. At the end of a long day, with my colleagues Mr. Pixley, Mr. Simpkins, et al., I often spend a few wickedly relaxing hours at a small club I know of where lap dancing is done. To have a well-built entertainer of either sex clad in little more than thong, pasties, and/or black bow tie sit in one's lap and gyrate has a marvellous effect. In this, of course, my views come into direct conflict with those of many. I believe that opposition to lap dancing is a destructive holdover from the Puritans, and have argued my point on a number of occasions, even with members of my own family—my children, and their spouses or companions. By now they know enough not to expect moralizing pabulum from me.

The children's mother, Ms. Frampton, and I had great sex throughout our long marriage and, quite candidly, before, when we were just a couple of randy college kids shacking up. In those days, Johnson (my pet name for my or any penis) could become an ivory wand virtually at command and achieve orgasm in just a few penile thrusts. Then, as now, I wore painted-on trousers with stirrups at the cuffs to pull them down even tighter, and my fiancée, Ms. Samples, did the same. We acquired a reputation on campus for unashamed and forthright behavior, which I have maintained ever since. All the kids except Gary know the time, place, and erotic circumstances of their conception, and are stronger for it. All the kids except Gary can tell you the particulars, thus freeing themselves and others from prudery and cant. When I heard that Gary was having problems at school, I flew up on the shuttle first thing the next morning, met with the Dean, Mr. Bentley, had sex, and thrashed out the whole situation. The following term, Gary's marks were back up where they belonged. Neither I, Gary's mother, nor his probable biological dad ever spared any effort with Gary, which is why I find some of his recent remarks unsubstantiated.

From the point of view of one who has spent the balance of his life pursuing vigorous sexual intercourse and sport-screwing, I can say that public attitudes have changed for the better. I give people like myself credit for this. How easy it would have been for me and my contemporaries to continue the backstairs bundling and fondling and frottage that characterized earlier times. But I am an avowed hedonist and sensualist, whose lasting legacy will be more of the same. I don't care how the future may judge me, Mr. Spradlin, as long as it acknowledges that I chased after anything in a skirt or trousers and mounted and was mounted freely. The sexual response is a pleasure given by God, in most cases. To deny this is to deny a natural desire to hear about my sex life and the sex lives of thousands of other businesspeople no different from ourselves. ◆

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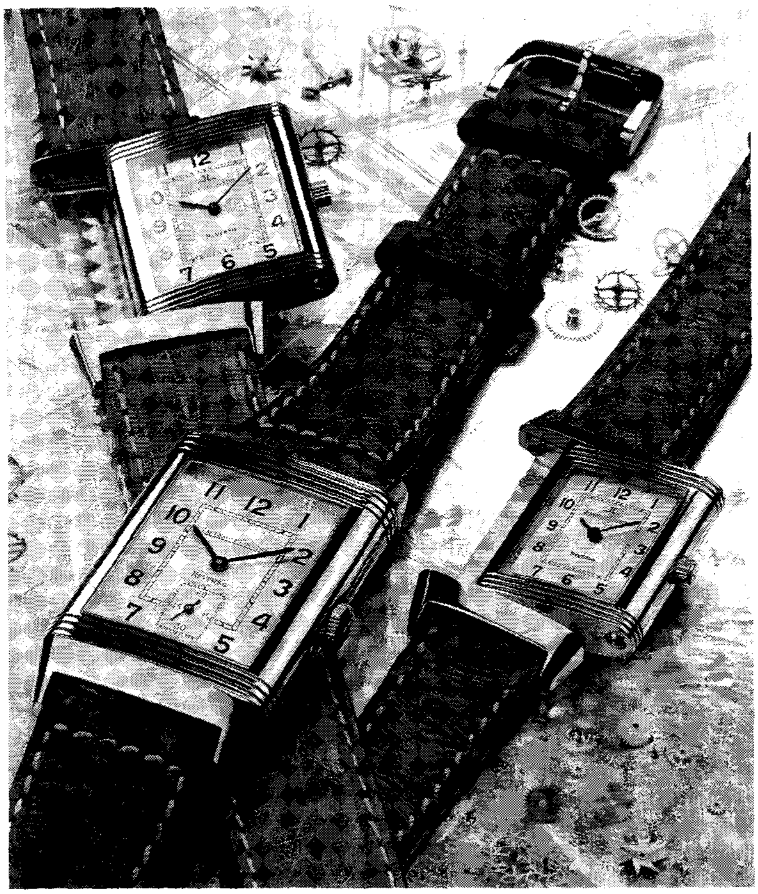

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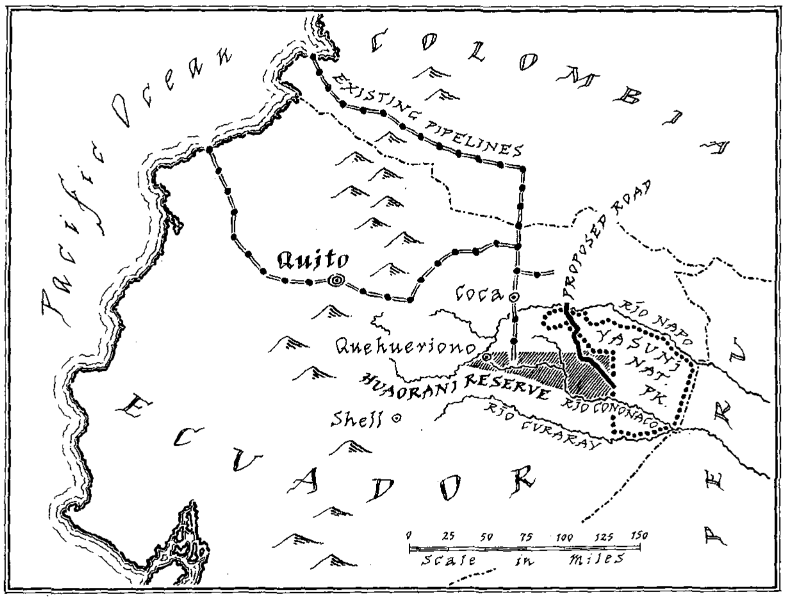
LETTER FROM THE AMAZON

WITH SPEARS FROM ALL SIDES

The Huaorani are an ancient tribe whose survival is threatened by American oil development in the Ecuadorian Amazon. They endured missionary zeal, corporate encroachment, and American environmentalist campaigns claiming to represent their interests. Then the Huaorani tried to save themselves.

BY JOE KANE

IN March of 1991, an odd letter surfaced at the San Francisco headquarters of the Rainforest Action Network (RAN). To this day, no one is quite sure how it got there. At first, RAN's executive director, Randall Hayes, wasn't sure what it said, either, because it was written in Spanish. It was addressed simply to "General Manager, DUPONT-CONOCO Company, United States of North America." It had been typed on a manual typewriter. "The company Conoco is discussing the life of the Huaorani in meetings at which the Huaorani are not present," the letter said, adding that on their own land the Huaorani, a small band of seminomadic hunter-gatherers who live deep in the Ecuadorian Amazon, "are treated as if we were guests." The letter expressed absolute opposition to oil exploitation in the Huao homeland, and warned that the Huaorani "know about the problems of the whole world . . . and we will defend our land." It was signed by the officers of something called the Organization of the Huaorani Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon. A cover note asked Hayes to forward the letter to Edgar S. Woolard, Jr., the chairman and C.E.O. of DuPont. Conoco was a DuPont subsidiary, with oil rights to the Huao lands, and so was ultimately under Woolard's control. The note advised Hayes to be careful, because "the Company has many spies."



At the time, I was working at the RAN office a few days a month helping Hayes edit his publications, and he asked if I'd translate the letter and try to find out if it was authentic. If it was, it would place the Conoco project—a project that RAN was waging a vigorous campaign to derail—in serious jeopardy. Though Conoco and its partners had already invested ninety million dollars in exploration of the Huao oil field, and predicted eventual revenues of two billion dollars, DuPont had to weigh that sum against the potential cost of being seen as trampling on the rights of, and perhaps annihilating, rain-forest natives.

But was the letter for real?

Many environmental and human-rights groups claimed to be working on behalf of the Huaorani, or their land. Letter-writing campaigns, boycotts, lawsuits, grants, and foundations were being pitched and caught by the likes of CARE, Cultural Survival, the Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Wildlife Conservation International, the Sierra Club, and RAN itself. In terms of both cost and reward, the money involved was substantial—tens of millions of dollars—and the infighting bitter. When I called around to the various offices, however, no one could convincingly vouch for—or produce evidence against—the letter; no one knew how to make contact with the Huaorani. All that could be said with certainty was that the Huaorani, whoever they might be, were trapped in the path of an American juggernaut, their fate bound up with a culture whose thirst for oil was second to none. American oil companies coveted their land, American missionaries their souls, American environmentalists their voice. But no one knew what the Huaorani wanted; no one really knew who the Huaorani were.

THE town of Coca sits on the north bank of the broad brown Napo River, in the heart of what may well be the richest biotic zone on the planet—the Ecuadorian Amazon, known as the Oriente. But as I entered the town for the first time, bouncing on the back of a flatbed pickup, what I smelled most strongly was raw petroleum. Coca is ringed by oil wells, and every few days its dirt streets are hosed down with waste crude. Oily mud splashed across my clothes and my pack. Along the roadside, oil had spattered chickens, mules, pigs, barefoot schoolchildren, and peasants slip-sliding along on rickety bicycles. It even slopped up onto the spanking-new four-wheel-drive trucks that now and then came blasting down the road at breakneck speed.

Some of the trucks bore the insignia of the state oil company, Petroecuador, but most of them belonged to American companies—Texaco, Occidental Petroleum, Arco, Unocal, Conoco, Maxus

OLIVER WILLIAMS

Energy, Oryx Energy, all of which have, or had, oil concessions in the otherwise sylvan wilderness that surrounds Coca for hundreds of square miles. Indeed, in Coca, though it is small, with a permanent population of less than three thousand, there are always Americans around. I ate lunch at a restaurant called El Buho. The menu featured such jungle fare as tapir (spiced with teeth-shattering shotgun pellets), capybara, guanta, venison, caiman, and peccary, but you could also get a cheeseburger and fries. The Mission, Coca's only hot-water hotel, was booked solid with Occidental executives in from the States, and at dawn the next day, when a squad of Ecuadorian soldiers jogged down the main street in earnest formation, what caught my attention in the sea of brown Latin skin was the blond hair and blue eyes of the man leading them; his uniform identified him as an officer in the United States Army.

The author with a Huao tribesman in the Oriente region of Ecuador, where oil spills are a common occurrence. Two weeks ago, a pipeline accident dumped thirty-eight thousand gallons of raw crude into the rain forest.

ZBIGNIEW BZDAK

If oil is the first thing you notice in Coca, the second is references to Aucas, the people indigenous to the vast and mostly uncharted stretch of the Oriente that begins across the Napo and extends over a hundred miles south and east, to the Peruvian border. Trinket shops sell Auca blowguns and spears, tour guides promote river trips to the Auca homeland to see "naked savages," and on the walls of the Hotel Auca, in the center of town, hang black-and-white photographs of Aucas dressed in, at most, bellybands and earrings, their short, powerfully muscled torsos painted and tattooed, their earlobes perforated and hugely distended. If you happen to mention that you are heading into Auca territory, you will probably be told that the Aucas regularly kill travellers, other Indians, and their own people, and that they will not only kill you but eat your flesh. And without a doubt you will hear the story of a Capuchin missionary named Alejandro Labaca.

In the late nineteen-seventies and eighties, Labaca, then the bishop of Coca, crossed the Napo and made the first sustained contact with several Auca bands living deep in the forest. At first, the Aucas robbed him blind. (They survive mainly by hunting and by gathering forest crops, and they regarded his belongings much as they would ripe coconuts.) But Labaca kept returning, and soon he was shedding his clothes and running naked through the forest with his new friends. In 1987, an oil exploration crew investigating the Auca territory by air spotted a hut that they believed to be the home of Tagae, the notoriously fierce leader of the most reclusive of the Auca clans. Labaca, worried that the company would track Tagae down and kill him, asked permission to make friendly contact with him first. A helicopter crew dropped Labaca in the clearing. It returned a few days later to find him pinned to the ground, spread-eagled, by seventeen palm-wood spears, each of them about ten feet long, which jutted like porcupine quills from his throat, chest, arms, and thighs. His corpse was punctured in eighty-nine places.

I first heard about Labaca one steamy night at the Hotel Auca, on a thatch-roofed patio where half a dozen Australian and Israeli tourists, young and long-haired, had gathered to drink beer. The man who told the story had taken a commercial boat ride near the Auca territory, but he hadn't seen the promised savages. "No naked Indians!" he said bitterly. "None!"

The patio was lit by a single candle, and by its dim light you couldn't really tell that four dark-skinned young men who happened to be sitting on the grass a few yards away weren't of Latin blood. The tourists ignored them—not that these men would ever identify themselves as Aucas. They would call themselves Huaorani: the People. In the language of their traditional enemies, the Quichua Indians, *auca* means "savage," and the Huaorani consider it a gross insult.

The four Huaorani hardly resembled the hotel's photographs. They wore spotless denim jeans, brightly shined plastic loafers, and bleached white cotton shirts. The first man I spoke with sometimes went by the name Eugenio, because he found it convenient to use a Latin name when he was visiting a foreign country, which is what he considered Ecuador to be. But if you looked closely when he smiled you could catch the candlelight glinting off his left front tooth, which had been inlaid with gold in the shape of an A. This was for Amo, his Huao name.

The man next to him, Enqueri, had no front teeth—he had hardly any upper teeth at all—and he was wearing a pair of headphones that appeared to be plugged into his right hip pocket. When I asked him what he was listening to, he replied in a tone so solemn I was sure I'd committed a horrible breach of Huao etiquette. "I am listening to my *pants*," he said. He let that hang for a moment, and then he and Amo collapsed with laughter, rolling on the ground and cackling wildly.

"To your pants!" Amo gasped. "What do they say?"

"They say, 'Wash me, you moron!' "

The other two men, whose names were Nanto and Moi, sat with their arms around each other's shoulders. Nanto told me that to reach Coca they had travelled by foot, canoe, and truck for three days. They had been in town five days, and had not eaten since they arrived. They had come to Coca to find the Company—the Huao name for all petroleum interests. The Company was going to drill oil wells inside the Huao territory, and build new roads, and the Huaorani did not want this. Nanto was going to tell the Company to stay out. He had the authority to do so, he said, because he was president of the Huaorani federation, which was called—here he rolled his eyes up into his head, searching for the name.

"The Organization of the Huaorani Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon," Moi said. Like the others, Moi had thick black hair cut long in back and straight across his eyes; unlike the others, he wore a crown of toucan feathers, and he didn't smile. Moi, Amo, and Enqueri were ONHAE's vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively. All were in their mid-twenties, though there was some disagreement on just where in his mid-twenties Enqueri was; and they had been elected by their people (there are about fifteen hundred Huaorani) to speak to the *cowode*—the cannibals, who included the missionaries, the Company, me, and everyone else on earth.

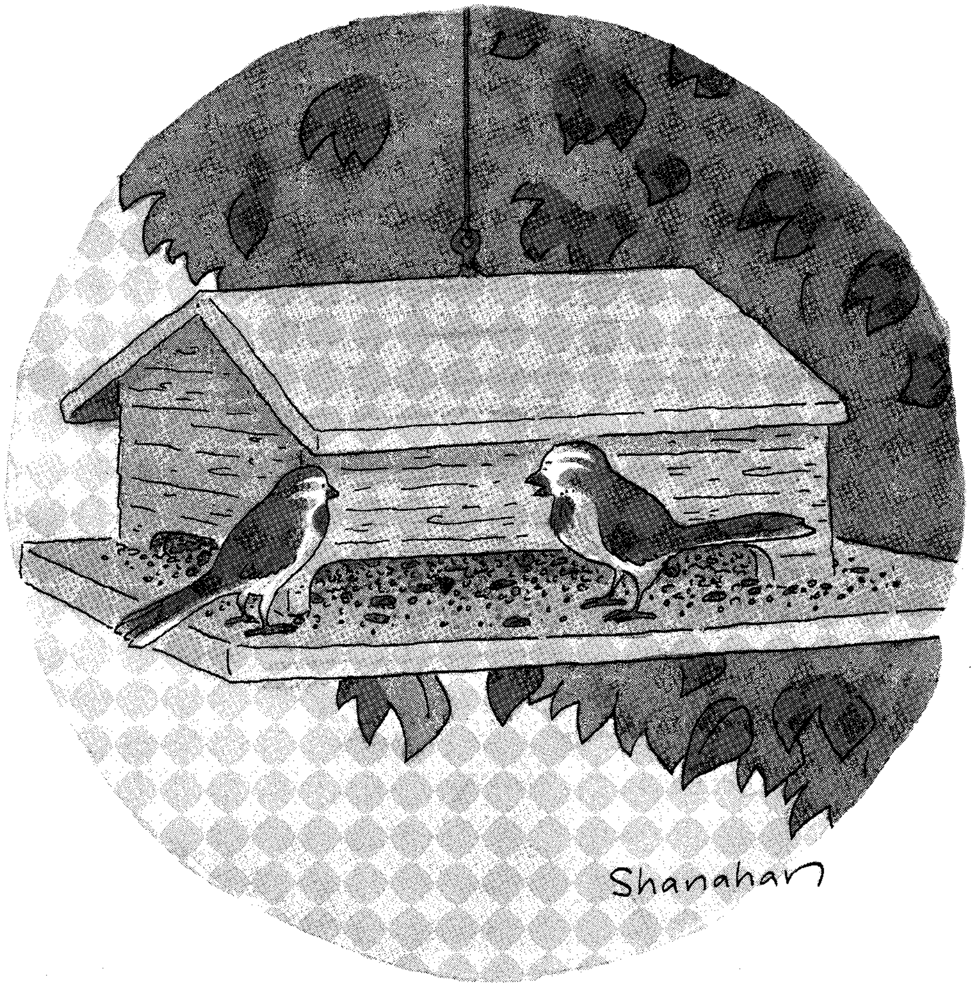
This reaching out was an extraordinary step for the Huaorani, who until the middle of this century were almost completely isolated from the world beyond their territory. (Their language is unrelated to any other in the Amazon, but some of the younger men now speak and are literate in Spanish.) These, however, were extraordinary times. In the heart of the Huao homeland, the Company had found oil reserves it estimated at two hundred and sixteen million barrels. It was about to begin constructing a ninety-mile access road, a hundred and fifty miles of service roads, and a pipeline, and drilling a hundred and twenty wells.

None of the projected two billion dollars in revenues would be shared with the Huaorani; under Ecuadorian law, the state retains all subsurface mineral rights. But from the Huao point of view, at least, money wasn't the issue. The issue was survival. Oil development in the Oriente is virtually unregulated, and it has been an environmental disaster, dumping millions of gallons of untreated contaminants into the watershed every day and opening the area up to such rapid and uncontrolled colonization that by some estimates it will be completely deforested early in the new century. The consequences have been borne most heavily by the Oriente's two hundred thousand indigenous people. To understand what looms for the Huaorani, one need look but a hundred miles north, to the Cofán. The Cofán were a small but thriving nation in 1967, when Texaco drilled its first exploration well in their homeland; today, their culture has almost completely disintegrated.

It is likely, in other words, that the Huaorani will be wiped out for the sake of enough oil to meet United States energy needs for thirteen days. However, the Ecuadorian government, which has a huge international debt, depends on oil production for nearly half its revenues, and it has outlawed any attempt by the Huaorani to impede the Company. In any case, ONHAE, from what I gathered, had no office, no phone, and no money. What, I asked, did the Huaorani propose to do?

It was Moi who answered, softly but without hesitation. "We will find the Company and talk to them," he said. "If they don't listen, we will attack with spears from all sides."

THE Huaorani are not hard to spot in Coca, once you know what to look for. They hate to travel alone—it's both dangerous and boring—so they're usually in groups of two or three or more, often with their arms around one another. They are shy but keenly observant. They'll stand for hours in front of the Kamikaze Disco or the Hotel Auca or a greasy spoon called Rosita's, studying the action as intently as if they were scanning the forest canopy for monkeys. If they're Huaorani making one of their first trips to town, you might see them on a street corner, mesmerized by the spectacle of cars and electric lights, or, if someone has given them shoes, by their own feet. A barefoot Huao from the far backcountry, a real tree climber, is particularly easy to spot: he's the linebacker with the big toes



"What say we blow off the nuts and seeds, and go grab ourselves some suet?"

that take off at right angles, like opposable thumbs. Sometimes you'll see a Huao walking through town innocently carrying a blowgun the length of a bazooka, while passersby freeze in terror. Now and then, a young Huao man will come into some cash, by selling a blowgun or a spear, or a harpy eagle, or a jaguar cub, or by earning slave wages as a boatman for a tour guide or as a laborer for the Company, and he will bring an entourage of other Huaorani with him to Rosita's and spend everything he has buying his friends fried chicken and soft drinks. This is not profligacy: the Huao ideal is to be independent and self-reliant, and every effort is made to give the appearance, at least, of being so clearly in tune with the abundance of the forest that one is without fear of need. (By the time a Huao is seven, he is expected to be able to survive on his own.) There is no higher manifestation of this ideal state than unqualified generosity, and no act more generous than to give away food.

"Not tonight, hon. It'll just wreak havoc with the motion sensors again."

• •

You can always find Huaorani out toward the east end of Coca, at the Huaorani Hotel, as it's known—a cinderblock shack with eight beds, which the Capuchin mission lets them use as a bunkhouse. The first morning I went there, a dozen Huaorani were sprawled across the beds, draped one over another, wrestling and laughing. T-shirts, a couple of pairs of pants, and a blanket were hanging on a line outside—to dry, the Huaorani told me, although it was raining so hard you couldn't see ten feet.

"Moi, what time is it?" Enqueri yelled from beneath a pile of brown bodies.

Moi, sitting in a corner, looked at his wrist. "In Japan, it is nine o'clock," he said. "In Europe, it is ten. In Ecuador, it is eleven. In America, it is twelve."

"Twelve o'clock," Enqueri said. "Time for the *cowode* to be hungry."

Enqueri was the first Huao I came to know well. At five feet seven, he's tall for a Huao. He has the meaty, forest walker's quadriceps that give the Huaorani an almost bowlegged lope on a city street, but his shoulders are uncharacteristically narrow, and when he laughs they shake up and down furiously, nearly touching his ears. When he laughs around *cowode*, he tries to keep his mouth closed, because he has learned to be ashamed of his bad teeth, but this is like holding a cat in a sack. Inevitably, he explodes in a steady cadence that goes, quite literally, "Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha." The other Huaorani call him Condorito, after a popular South American comic-book character—an avian, frenetically absent-minded cross between Woody Woodpecker and Elmer Fudd. "Enqueri is like Condorito because his head has too many ideas," Amo told me. "One day, he wants to be a schoolteacher, and the next day he wants to devote his life to the People, and the next day he is working for the Company, and the next day he wants to kill the Company, and the next day he is going to be a nurse, and the next day he wants to go to the sky and be with God."

Enqueri may well be confused, but a man forced to leap from the Stone Age to the Petroleum Age is going to have a few things on his mind. Certainly any idea that Enqueri is a fool is misplaced. He is easily the most literate of the Huaorani, able to read and write both Spanish and Quichua. These skills he owes directly to a day in 1956 when his father helped kill five American evangelical missionaries who had plunged into the Huao territory bent on saving the "Aucas" from their heathen existence. The Aucas were "a hazard to explorers, an embarrassment to the Republic of Ecuador, and a challenge to missionaries of the Gospel," one of the men, Nate Saint, wrote in his journal—a journal in which he recorded sharing dinner with the naked brown savage he called George, and which he kept right up until the moment George's friends ran him through with a spear. Nate had an older sister, Rachel, who had raised him like a son. When she got word of the massacre, she went after the savages, and she applied herself with a holy vengeance. Within a few years, through sheer stubbornness, the intimidating magic of airplanes and bullhorns, and the seductive luxury of salt, white rice, and aluminum pots, she had managed to establish a Christian beachhead inside the Huaorani territory, a few miles from the very spot where her brother Nate had eaten his last hamburger.

Supported by the Ecuadorian government and by legions of believers back home, Rachel built a chapel and established an elementary school and set about sculpting a new model of Huaorani: one who spoke Spanish, saluted the flag, honored God, understood the value of a dollar (or, at least, an Ecuadorian sucre), and rejected such heathen practices as shamanism, nomadism, nudity, and "free love." The Condorito excelled in his studies, and won the privilege of attending secondary school outside the territory. There, however, he fell under the influence of more worldly and sophisticated Indians who had begun to organize their people into federations of a decidedly leftist bent. He went home with some new ideas. When he got together with Nanto and Moi to found ONHAE, he said, Rachel branded him a Communist and his family ostracized him—and such ostracism in a clan society can be tantamount to a death sentence.

At Rosita's, where I found myself picking up the tab for fried chicken for thirteen, I asked Enqueri to define "Communist." He thought about it for a moment, then said, "Someone from Cuba."

"Where is Cuba?"

"In France," he said, and he added that when a Communist dies he cannot go to the sky.

As we ate, I asked Moi, Amo, and Nanto what they thought of the various proposals being put forward in their name, or for their land, by environmental and human-rights groups in the United States and Europe. (By this time, I was no longer working for RAN.) As it turned out, the one thing that all the groups had in common was that the Huaorani hadn't heard of any of them.

"How can these people speak for us if we have never met them?" Nanto asked.

Of all the proposals being made, by far the most controversial was one advanced by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and the Natural Resources Defense Council, a New York-based environmental group, for which Kennedy is a staff attorney. Kennedy's organization was willing to confer on Conoco the "green" blessing that the company required for the project to continue, but it wanted Conoco to fund a foundation to benefit the Oriente's Indian groups. Not even Kennedy knew how much money that would be, but the numbers being used in the negotiations ran from five million dollars to more than two hundred million.

I tried to explain to the Huaorani what such numbers meant, but these were men who on the rare occasions when they worked for wages earned about a dollar a day, and whose fathers counted one, one plus one, one plus two, two plus two, five. Finally, Moi dismissed the proposal out of hand. "You can't put a price on our land," he said.

I showed the Huaorani a copy of the letter that had come to RAN. It had been denounced by Conoco, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Cultural Survival (a Cambridge-based human-rights group, and the only other nonprofit group invited to participate in the Conoco-N.R.D.C. discussions), and United States Embassy workers sympathetic to the oil industry, who claimed, variously, that the Huaorani were illiterate and could not have written it, that the Huaorani had written it but had done so under the coercion of "outsiders," and that the Huaorani who wrote it did not really represent all the Huaorani. But if the letter was indeed authentic it raised the possibility that the N.R.D.C. was operating without portfolio, and that meant that it threatened to blow the proposal out of the water, and perhaps drive Conoco out of the Oriente.

Nanto said yes, the letter was from ONHAE. Why would anyone claim that it wasn't? After all, he pointed out, it was stamped with the ONHAE seal. He reached into a plastic bag, rummaged among shirts and pants, and produced a shiny black plastic briefcase, the sole contents of which were an ink pad and a rubber stamp. He loaded up the stamp and pounded it on the back of Enqueri's hand, producing a harpy eagle ringed by the name of the organization. "Isn't that beautiful?" he asked.

How had the letter reached the United States?

EXAMS

How deep those first days were
and clear as water.
We owned nothing then
but the shadows on our backs,
lacked nothing we knew of.

We crawled, we walked. At kindergarten
we played in a shallow stream of words.
Polishing the places
where someday
tall persons might stand.

But after years burrowing into old buildings
counting the others who are there,
our eyes—grown dark with listening—
shine like abandoned mines
where lake water was lately heard to rise.

Where are the wizards we were sure were there,
who knew how to learn
but could not teach us?

Now we are up to now—
and anywhere but here is fiction.
We are the last known examples
in the last known week of our counting.

Under the yellow rapids of light we sit,
ignorant as ever,
Searching for fictions
that might interest an examiner.

—Lois Moyles

Nanto shrugged. "We gave it to a *cowode* we met here in Coca," he said.

The Huaorani ordered a second round of fried chicken, and while we waited I asked if it was true, as I'd been told by the Natural Resources Defense Council, that only ten Huaorani lived in Block 16, the Conoco concession that was first in line for development.

Moi almost exploded. "No!" he said. "That is what the Company wants people to believe, but it's not true at all. There are at least five clans in there."

"You must come and see for yourself," Enqueri said.

Nanto proposed that Enqueri take me into the territory. He would make a census of the Block 16 area, and I would be a witness. Our journey would be roughly circular. In Coca, we—I—would hire a small truck to haul us sixty miles south down an oil-exploration road called the Vía Auca, until we reached the Shiripuno River, which we would follow east by canoe to the Cononaco River. There Amo's grandfather, Quemperi, lived, with his clan. From the Cononaco we would walk seventy-five miles north, to the Yasuní River, crossing Block 16. With luck, one of the Huao clans on the Yasuní would take us by canoe down the Yasuní and back up the Napo—west to Coca. "The trip will take two weeks," Enqueri said. "Or four weeks. Or six weeks."

"It might even take a month," Amo said.

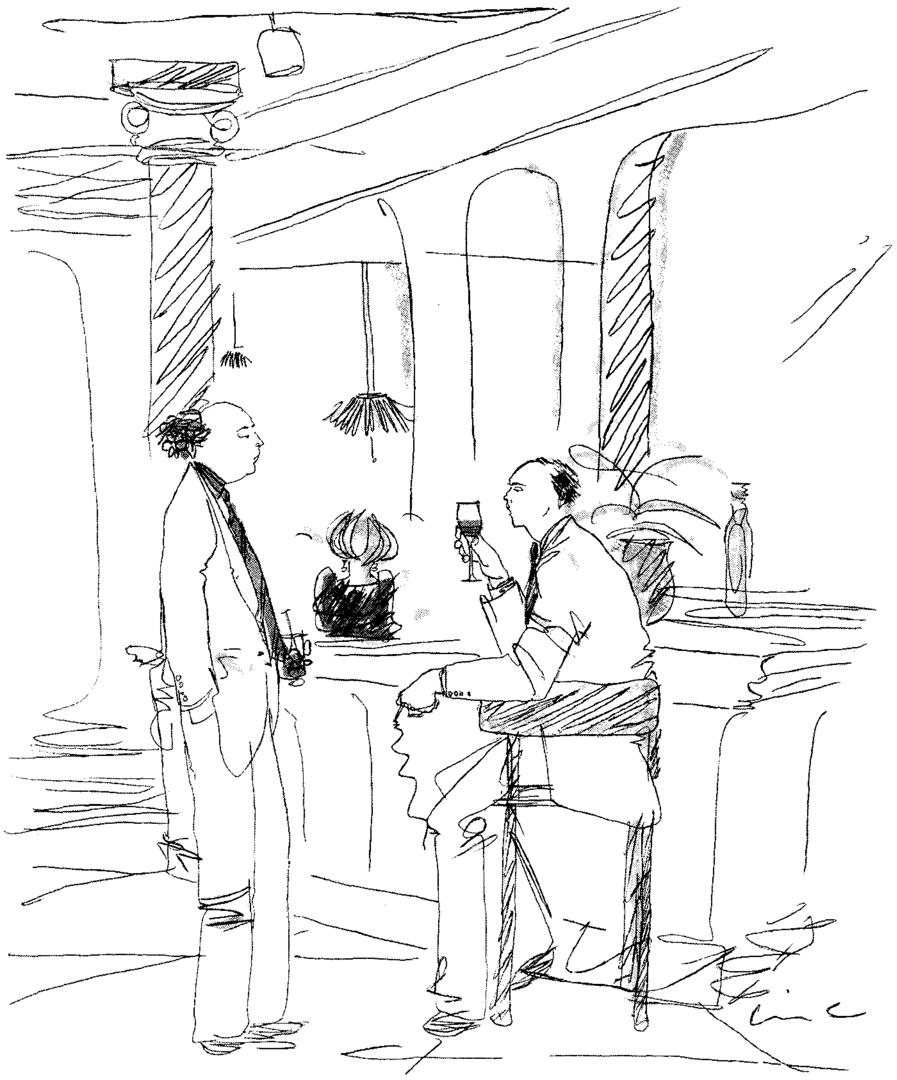
I WENT to the military command post to obtain permission to enter the Huao territory, but I was told, darkly, that the Huaorani can't take foreign visitors into their homeland, because they bring "a mountain of bad ideas." Later, when I explained this to Enqueri, he asked me for some money and told me to be ready to travel at dawn.

At five minutes to five, a small truck pulled up to my hotel. Enqueri was sitting in the bed, surrounded by a fifty-five-gallon drum of gas, ten plastic litres of oil, a hundred-pound bag of rice and another of sugar, and a plastic sack filled with cooking oil, shotgun shells, cookies, fishhooks, canned tuna, five pairs of rubber boots, three pairs of men's undershorts, and who knows what else. He handed me a fistful of cash and a piece of paper. "Your change and your receipt," he said.

As we rolled through the predawn streets of Coca, one Huao after another materialized out of the shadows—men and women and children and babies—and by the time we reached the Napo at least fifteen of them were stuffed into the truck's bed and hanging off its sides. They screamed with delight when the truck careened around a corner and threatened to pitch them headlong into the street. When we approached the command post at the bridge, Enqueri pushed down on my shoulders, forcing me to the floor. Bodies smelling of earth and smoke swarmed over me. The truck slowed, then stopped, and I heard an exchange in Spanish; one of the voices was Enqueri's. Then we accelerated, and fifteen minutes later Enqueri hauled me to my feet. Before us, the oil-soaked dirt road known as the Vía Auca snaked into low hills; far in the distance, it dropped into an arboreal quiltwork that looked to be four billion shades of green.

IN 1967, Texaco made the first major discoveries of commercial oil in the Oriente. In 1972, it completed a three-hundred-and-twelve-mile oil pipeline from the Oriente to Ecuador's Pacific coast. Over the next seventeen years—until 1989, when Petroecuador assumed operational control of the pipeline—it shipped 1.4 billion barrels of oil through the pipeline. The pipeline ruptured twenty-seven times, spilling what was estimated to be 16.8 million gallons of raw crude (more than the Exxon Valdez), most of it into the Oriente's delicate web of rivers, creeks, and lagoons.

Although the Oriente is a biological treasure chest—about the size of Alabama, it is home to what are estimated to be eight to twelve thousand species of plants, or up to five per cent of all the



"This year, I'm putting all my money into money."

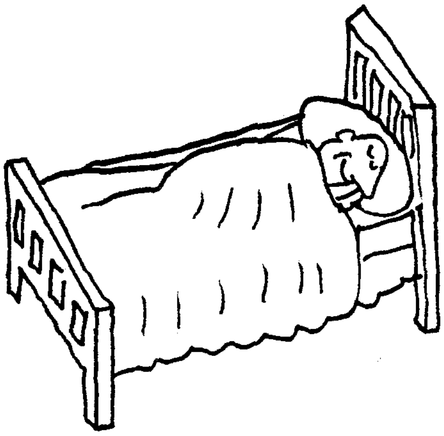
plant species on earth—almost no attempt was made to assess the environmental impact of oil development until 1989, when a woman named Judith Kimerling came to Ecuador and began to stick her nose into things. A graduate of Yale Law School, and a former environmental litigator in the office of the New York State Attorney General (she helped to prosecute the Love Canal case), Kimerling has spent most of the last four years investigating the Company. Travelling by foot, canoe, and truck, sleeping in Indian homes, she has visited producing wells, exploratory sites, and seismic trails. She estimates that in addition to the pipeline spills—the pipeline is now all but worn out and ruptures with increasing frequency—the petroleum industry is spilling ten thousand gallons a week from secondary flow lines and is dumping some 4.3 million gallons of untreated toxic waste directly into the watershed every day. Where the Company is at work, she says, malnutrition rates in the local population are as high as ninety-eight per cent, and health workers report high rates of cancer, birth defects, and other health problems linked to contaminants. Kimerling has little doubt where the blame resides: nearly all the oil produced in the Oriente was produced by Texaco and Petroecuador. "Texaco was the teacher," Kimerling says. "Petroecuador was the student."

What this means for the local people can be seen in almost any of the hamlets and well sites outside Coca. I was able to visit perhaps twenty such sites. The Quichua village of San Carlos is typical. The president of the community, Ignacio Sequihua, took me to see an oil well drilled by Texaco in 1977 and turned over to Petroecuador in 1990. It sits on one bank of a small creek that drains into the Manduro River, which, until Texaco arrived, was a principal source of fish and of drinking and bathing water for San Carlos. There is a waste pit next to the well. The pit, about the size of an Olympic swimming pool, is simply a hole dug in the forest floor. According to Kimerling, raw crude oil, toxic drilling wastes, formation water (water that is pumped up from the ground along with petroleum and carries such heavy metals as arsenic, cadmium, cyanide, lead, and mercury), maintenance wastes (including industrial solvents and acids), and the related effluvia of the oil-extraction process are regularly dumped into such pits, and the pits regularly wash out in the Oriente's heavy rains. Here black, tarlike pit waste coated both banks of the creek. It covered every rock and branch jutting out of the creek, and it spread in a glistening black carpet down the banks and as far back into the forest as I could see. When I reached into the creek, my hands came out covered with black goo, and I couldn't rinse it off.

"Now Texaco is gone, and the Company says the wells are cleaned up," a woman said. "How does it look to you?"

"When Texaco came, they didn't ask us for permission to enter," Ignacio Sequihua said. "They didn't talk to us at all. They just came." The villagers cut down trees and blocked Texaco's trucks for a month, until the military threatened them. "We were afraid they would attack us at night, so we stopped the blockade and signed an agreement with the Company. We had no choice."

SINCE Kimerling published her findings, in a book entitled "Amazon Crude," she has received so many physical threats that she will no longer travel in the Oriente without an escort. Petroecuador tried to have her deported, and though it was dissuaded by the American Embassy, which argued that making an international incident of Kimerling's investigation would only draw further attention to it, she was arrested by the military, who control most of the oil-producing territory. She has also spent weeks bedridden with shigellosis, a rare bacteriological infection she picked up in the field, and until July of last year, when she was awarded a grant from the MacArthur Foundation—on her thirty-sixth birthday—funding for her research was so scarce that she often lived hand to mouth in one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere.

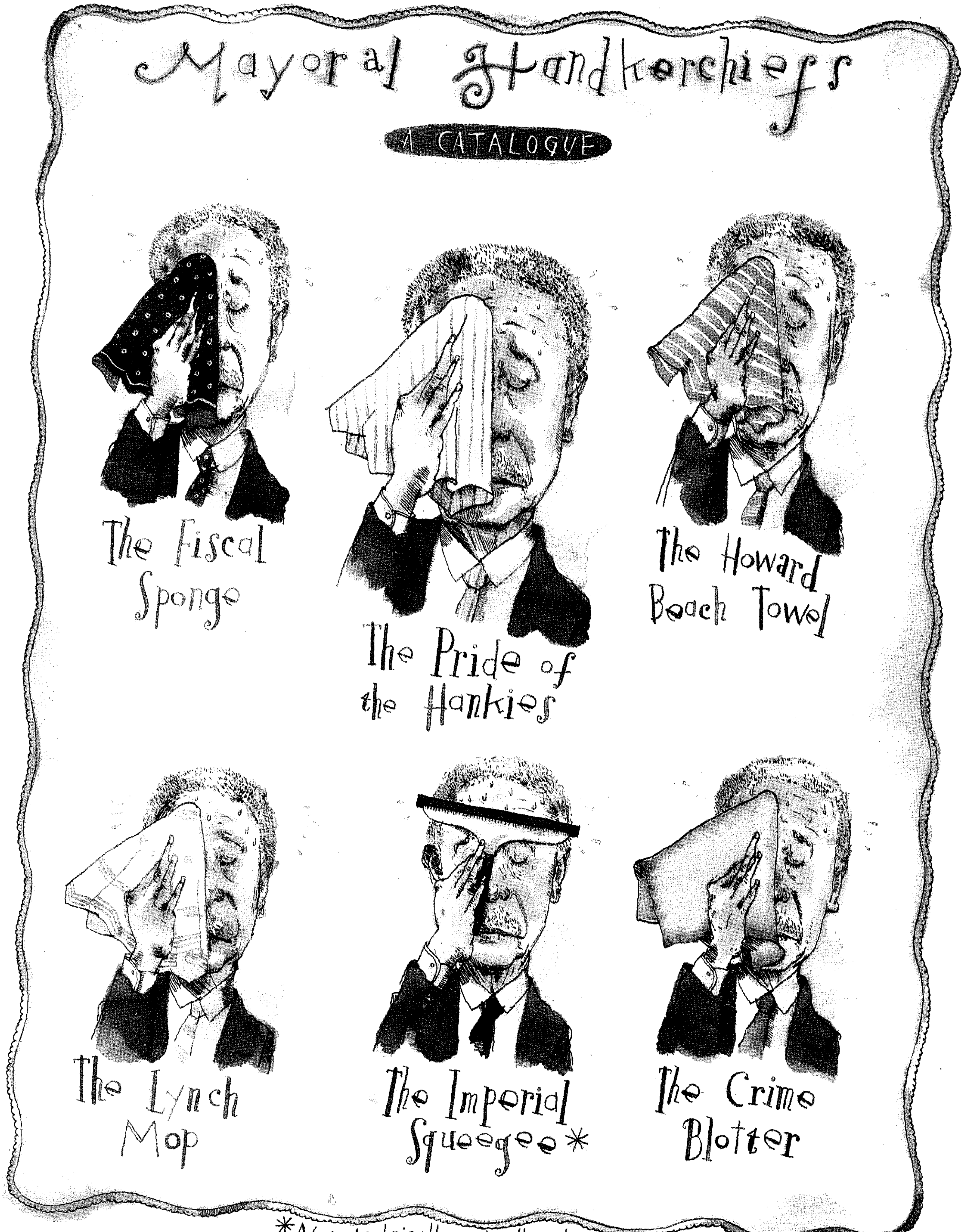


Difficult as things became for her in Ecuador, however, Kimerling says she suffered most at the hands of two men she considered her allies—Robert Kennedy and S. Jacob Scherr, the director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's international program. In 1990, Kennedy and Scherr asked her to show them the Oriente, which neither man had ever seen, and she took them on a five-day tour. Powerfully moved, they hired her, and together they wrote to Edgar Woolard, the chairman of DuPont, to condemn Conoco's plans.

Though Conoco would be the first company ever to produce oil inside the Huaorani homeland, it represented something even larger: what it had discovered beneath the virgin rain forest inhabited by the Huaorani was substantial deposits of heavy crude, the production of which has only recently been made commercially viable by technical advances, and which the Oriente has in abundance. The Ecuadorian government was counting on Conoco to launch "the era of heavy crude," for which the Company predicted the country would receive three billion dollars in foreign investment through the end of the century, and tens of billions more in revenues. Conoco, in other words, was the key to opening up huge tracts of the Oriente to oil exploitation. However, it was so staunchly opposed by activist groups in the United States, Ecuador, and Europe that in late 1990, facing serious talk of a boycott, Edgar Woolard indicated that unless Conoco could come up with a sign of support from its opponents he would consider shutting down its Ecuadorian operation.

When the N.R.D.C. entered the battle, Conoco requested a meeting. It took place in the N.R.D.C.'s Manhattan office in November of 1990, and Kennedy and Scherr, in an abrupt about-face, left it convinced that forcing Conoco out of the Oriente would be a mistake—that Conoco would do a cleaner job than the companies that would move in if Conoco pulled out. Conoco's attitude was " 'We understand your complaints about the plan, and we're willing to fix it,' " Kennedy said later.

Kimerling was aghast. "We had clear instructions from the people we were working with in Ecuador that they did not want Conoco to go forward," she said.


Mayoral Handkerchiefs
A CATALOGUE
The Fiscal Sponge
The Pride of the Hankies
The Howard Beach Towel
The Lynch Mop
The Imperial Squeegee*
The Crime Blotter

*Not technically a handkerchief.

D. Blitt

"If a deal was going to be made, that decision had to be made in Ecuador." When she refused to fall into line, she was fired.

At a second meeting, held in New York the following February, Conoco offered to put up ten million dollars toward a nonprofit foundation in exchange for the N.R.D.C.'s endorsement. "Do you know what that would mean down there?" Kennedy asked me a few months later. "We saw a hospital in the Oriente that was operating on a budget of three thousand dollars a year. If you had that kind of money, and you had it in a framework where the Indians couldn't steal it, you could make a vast difference. And you would have a model. The Indians could then go to any oil company that came into the Oriente and say, 'You have to match this.' They'd be getting more than a piece of cash—they'd be getting a way to ratchet themselves into the corridors of power. They'd be able to stand up to the military, and the government would have no choice but to deal with them. Conoco was the ideal place to start that process."

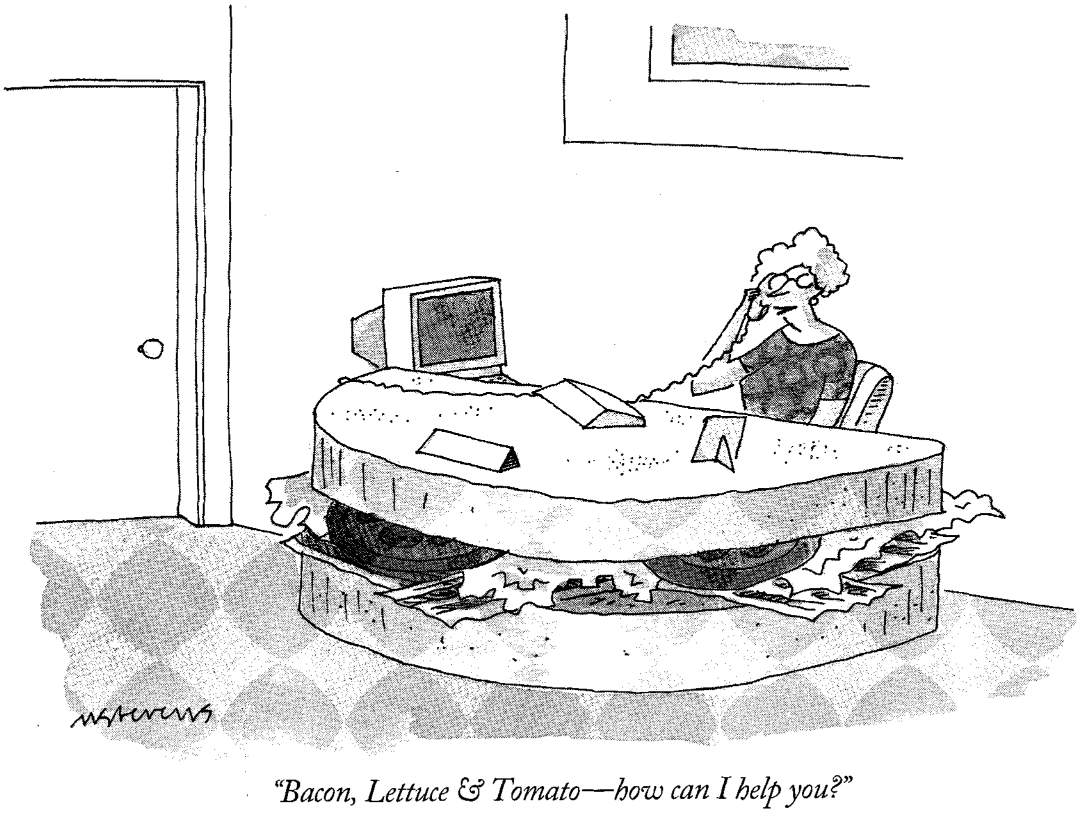
In March, Kennedy and Scherr sought out Valerio Grefa, then the president of the Confederation of the Indigenous Nations of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), the umbrella under which the political leaders of seven of the Oriente's indigenous groups come together. For the most part, these groups are small—there are perhaps five hundred Cofán left, and maybe seven hundred Siona-Secoya—and, aside from local contact with colonists, missionaries, and the Company, they are extremely isolated. (Though the Cofán and the Huaorani live less than a hundred miles apart, for example, travel between their two territories is so physically difficult that the two nations have no contact.) By contrast, there are about ninety thousand Quichua and fifty thousand Shuar; they are not only the Oriente's largest nations but its most politically and economically acculturated. Quichua and Shuar leaders travel to the United States and Europe, and their federations have airplanes, radio networks, and urban offices.

The Quichua and the Shuar have always controlled CONFENIAE, but in the past they did so with a spirit of inclusion—it was through the auspices of CONFENIAE, in fact, that the Huaorani gained official title to part of their traditional territory. That spirit faded in 1991, when Valerio Grefa became president. A Quichua, and known in some parts of the Amazon as El Vaselino, he quickly rekindled the centuries-old enmity between the Huaorani and the two larger nations, which have long coveted Huao land. Among other things, ONHAE has publicly accused him of stealing funds raised in its name. Grefa denies the charge. Still, it was with Grefa that Kennedy and Scherr met to discuss, in essence, the sale of the Huao homeland; they clearly considered this tantamount to speaking with the Huaorani. ("Well, who *are* the Huaorani?" Kennedy asked me.) Grefa immediately presented a counterproposal. For CONFENIAE's blessing of the Conoco project, he wanted not five or ten million dollars but two hundred and eleven million, or about a dollar a barrel for all the oil in Block 16. "In some of the Quichua communities," he later told Nanto and Moi, "we have just had to accept the fact that the Company is here, and work from that."

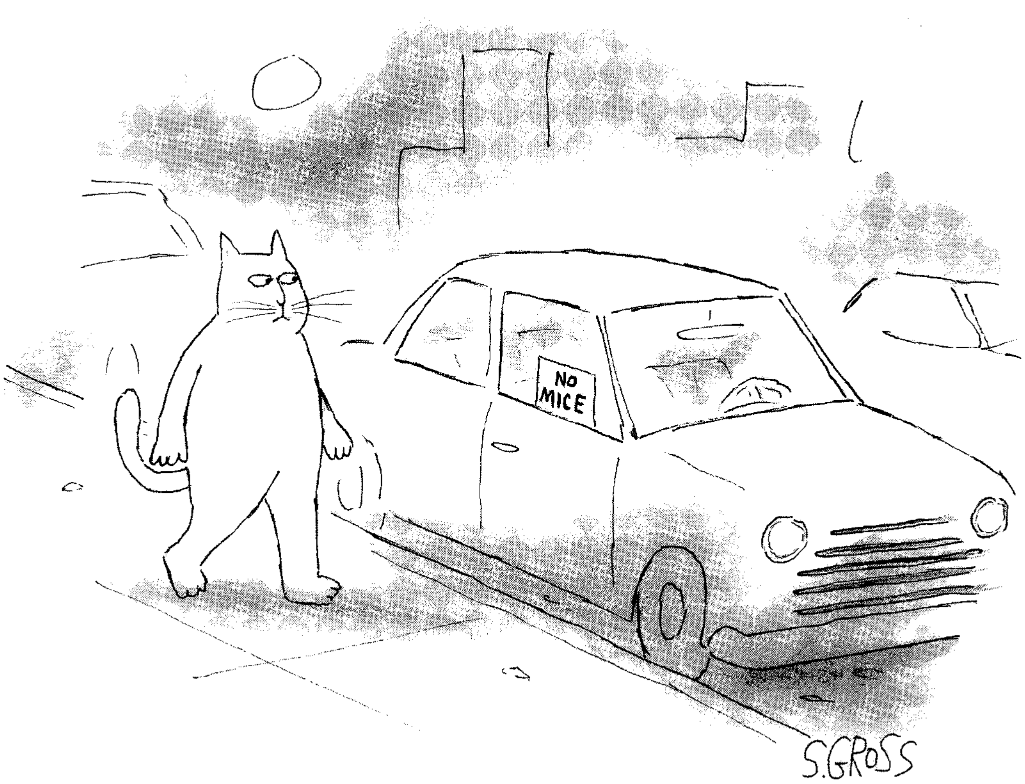
Confidential notes of the second N.R.D.C. meeting with Conoco were leaked to every nonprofit in the world with an interest in the Oriente, and the N.R.D.C. quickly found itself under wide attack. In late May, Kennedy and Scherr again flew to Ecuador, where they were greeted, loudly and rudely, with picket lines supported by La Campaña Amazonia por la Vida, a coalition of thirteen Ecuadorian environmental and human-rights groups. "Robert Kennedy and Jacob Scherr are what we call environmental imperialists," Esperanza Martínez, who was then a coördinator of Campaña, told me. "They came to Ecuador for five days, and then they went home and sat down with an oil company and decided they knew what was best for us. What on earth gave them that right?"

Meanwhile, Kennedy and Scherr had relayed Grefa's offer to Conoco. It was about then, seemingly out of nowhere, that the ONHAE letter surfaced in the United States. Suddenly, Conoco wasn't sure just who spoke for the Huaorani. It appeared that Robert Kennedy didn't; it appeared that maybe Valerio Grefa didn't, either. As for the Huaorani themselves—who, indeed, were they?

By the time the morning sun burst above the jungle wall, Enqueri and I and our truckload of Huaorani were a good twenty



"Bacon, Lettuce & Tomato—how can I help you?"



miles out of Coca, driving down the Vía Auca toward the Huao territory, and I'd already broken into what would become a monthlong sweat. I had anticipated a brief fact-finding tour; as it turned out, I was in and out of the Huao lands a dozen times in the next eighteen months.

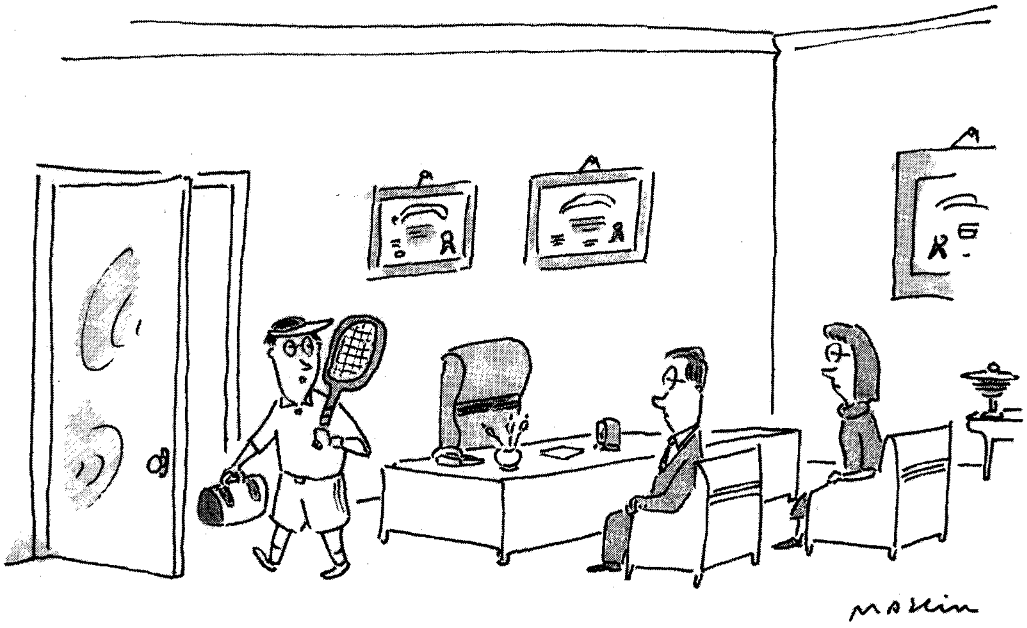
The territory is about a hundred and seventy miles wide, east to west, and roughly a hundred miles long, but it is split by the Vía Auca. From Coca the Auca runs sixty miles due south into the territory, but for four miles on each side of the road the land has been set aside for colonization. This zone, which on a map appears jarringly foursquare amid the graceful curves of rivers and creeks, is a legacy of the symbiotic relationship between American evangelical missionaries and the Company. When Royal Dutch/Shell was exploring the Oriente in the nineteen-forties, the Huaorani reacted as they had to every other *cowode* encroachment for as far back as anyone knows: they resisted violently, killing hundreds of peasant workers and looting the camps. But in the late nineteen-sixties and seventies, in understandings with the government and with Texaco, Rachel Saint and other North American missionaries affiliated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (a worldwide evangelical network, with headquarters in Texas, that is dedicated to translating the Bible into indigenous tongues) conducted a program of pacification that, with the aid of magic and trinkets—airplanes and salt—lured the Huaorani into a small protectorate on the far western edge of their traditional lands. This move helped Texaco blaze the route of the Vía Auca, which opened the Huao homeland to large-scale colonization for the first time and promoted exploration by several other oil companies, including, most recently, Arco, which last year announced that it had found, in a concession that comprises both Huao and Quichua land, an estimated hundred and sixty-four million barrels of crude.

For almost the entire four hours it takes to drive the length of the Vía Auca, a rusty steel pipeline runs alongside the road. Actually, it's several lines: a main line, about three feet in diameter, and one or more auxiliary lines, which are fed from pumping stations built by Texaco and Petroecuador. In some places, the pipeline rests right on the ground, and in others it's raised on stilts. Men tether their horses to it, and women spread their washing on it to dry, and children play on it. On a clear day, the metal soaks up so much equatorial sun that it's hot to the touch, but when you can rest a hand on it you feel the oil pulsing along inside. Every few miles, the line passes a separation station, where a flame as big as a house flares from a metal stack, burning off natural gas. The flames, visible for miles, burn night and day, producing such intense heat that colonists spread their coffee harvest beneath them to dry.

Oil and waste spills are common on the Auca. Trucks plow into the pipeline, trees fall on it, and in some places it is nearly rusted through. The pipes have no check valves, and when one of them ruptures it can spill for days, until someone at a receiving station far down the line notices a drop in production. Sometimes the waste spills are deliberate. Two-thirds of the way down the road, at the Shiripuno River, there is a Texaco well inherited by Petroecuador. "The Company dug a canal from the waste pit to the river, and it drained right above a Huaorani village," Enqueri said. "Children were swimming in the river. When they came out of the water, they had black all over their bodies. They were asking, 'What is this?' Nanto went to the Company, but the Company said the spill hadn't happened. There was nothing we could do."

From beginning to end, the Vía Auca is lined, in ones and twos and in clumps, with the colonists' rickety wooden shacks. The colonists come from the dry hills of Loja, in southern Ecuador, and from the coast, and from the Oriente itself—many of the new settlers are Shuar. They raise cattle and coffee—neither of them well suited to the area's poor soils—but mostly they work for the Company, cutting roads, digging wells, cooking food. The colonists suffer, and their children are often hungry and sick. Still, they say that life on the Auca is better than the life they left behind. By law, the land was there for the taking, free to anyone willing to cut down the trees and work it, and in Ecuador land, no matter how poor, has always been the true measure of wealth.

Bored with the trinkets and magic that had drawn them to the protectorate, however, several Huao clans have drifted back to the Auca, and today the mood along the road is undeniably tense. (The Quito media have taken to calling the



"Beth, you must learn to recognize Sam's needs, and, Sam, you must learn to recognize Beth's needs, and you both must learn to recognize my needs."

situation there a war.) Violent confrontations between the Huaorani and the colonists—especially the Shuar—are common. When Enqueri and I left Coca, in fact, the word on the street was that a Huao had been killed near the Shiripuno, and when we arrived at the Shiripuno bridge two dozen colonists and a handful of Huaorani were engaged in a heated argument in the middle of the road, their anger held in check only tenuously by a Capuchin priest and a gang of nervous soldiers. Nobody was dead, but shots had been fired and houses burned. Enqueri defused the situation by giving the Huaorani much of the food and gas we were carrying and sending them downriver, but no one pretended that this was anything more than a temporary solution. "It will get worse before it gets better," the priest said.

Enqueri showed me an exploration camp that had been operated by Unocal from 1989 until 1991. When the camp was abandoned, a Huao clan tore it apart, to prevent it from being taken over by the military, and then built huts on top of the old concrete foundations. Anything the Huaorani hadn't destroyed they put to use. In one hut, a wood fire burned on a linoleum floor, and the head of a wild boar had been strung on an electric cord to smoke; in another, masticated yucca fermented in a stainless-steel sink. In several homes, sheets of heavy plastic had been fashioned into hammocks, and drinking water was stored in old gasoline cans. At the last home we visited, I found a shelf full of drugs: erythromycin, codeine, penicillin, and half a dozen others. The man of the house said that the Company had given him the medicine, and that his family took it for coughs.

"Which one do you take for coughs?" I asked.

"They are all the same," he said.

Beyond the camp, the Vía Auca died into a small, muddy track nearly overrun by vegetation. Enqueri and I walked a few hundred yards down the track, into a gully, and there we met a Huao family returning from what they considered a wildly successful hunting trip. They were a father, a mother, a young son, and a toddling daughter; they carried a shotgun, a spear, and a blowgun; and their prize, which they were rolling uphill with great effort and greater glee, was a badly dented fifty-five-gallon drum that had been discarded in the bush when Unocal abandoned its camp. The drum was clearly full, but of what no one knew. "It could be diesel," Enqueri said, "or extra," which is what the Huaorani call all gasoline, "or it could be forty-forty-one-hundred"—motor oil—"or it could be something else," which in all likelihood would be chemical waste. Whatever was in the drum, the family hoped to burn it in the kerosene lamps that the Company had left behind. "The Company hid many of these barrels around here," Enqueri said. "At least, they thought they hid them. But you cannot hide anything from the Huaorani."

The mud track led to an exploration well that had been operated until 1990 by Petro-Canada. Lured by the prospect of easy booty—by then, the Company, resigned to the inevitable, was allowing the Huaorani to help themselves to food and clothing if they didn't molest the camps—three clans left the protectorate to compete for looting rights to the Petro-Canada site, and within weeks it was occupied by dozens of Huaorani. One clan was led by a man named Babae, whose father and grandfather had hunted the area tamed by the Vía Auca. In 1989, the Company moved Babae's clan, by helicopter, to a new village, which it had built for them on the Vía Auca. When they had settled into their village, which consisted of twelve one-room shacks, Babae held a celebration feast. No other Huaorani attended, but the Company came, and so did the missionaries and the military; and Babae drank his first hard liquor, initiating a habit that soon landed him in a mission-run detox program. Before long, the clan women in the village were working the oil camps as prostitutes, and many Huaorani were sick with *cowode* disease. The next year, the colonists who had been thrown off the land so that the village could be built returned and burned it. But the Company kept Babae happy with gifts, and built him a new house, of three rooms. Enqueri took me there. Deep-chested and broad-shouldered, Babae radiates physical strength. He is said to have a violent temper; it inspires fear all along the Vía Auca, in colonists and Huaorani alike. His father had been a fearsome warrior. "He died in battle," Babae said. "Not far from here."

Enqueri had brought him rice and fishhooks. At this, Babae grinned hugely, flashing a mouthful of gleaming teeth—Company dentures.

Babae was proud of his new house, though it was built of planks rather than the traditional thatch, and had no windows, and was as dark as a cave, and felt hot enough to bake bread in. One room had a foam mattress, gnawed to shreds by rats. This, Babae said, was where tourists would stay. The family cooked in the next room, on a pile of sand that had been poured onto the wood floor, and slept in the third, which was carpeted wall-to-wall with Company flotsam: candy wrappers, discarded tuna tins, spent shotgun shells, a couple of car tires, a broken radio, several empty rum bottles and cigarette cartons, an empty fuel can, old magazines and newspapers. Babae pointed out the light fixtures and the wall sockets. The house had no electricity, of course. The Company, he said, had given him a generator, but someone had come in the night and stolen it.

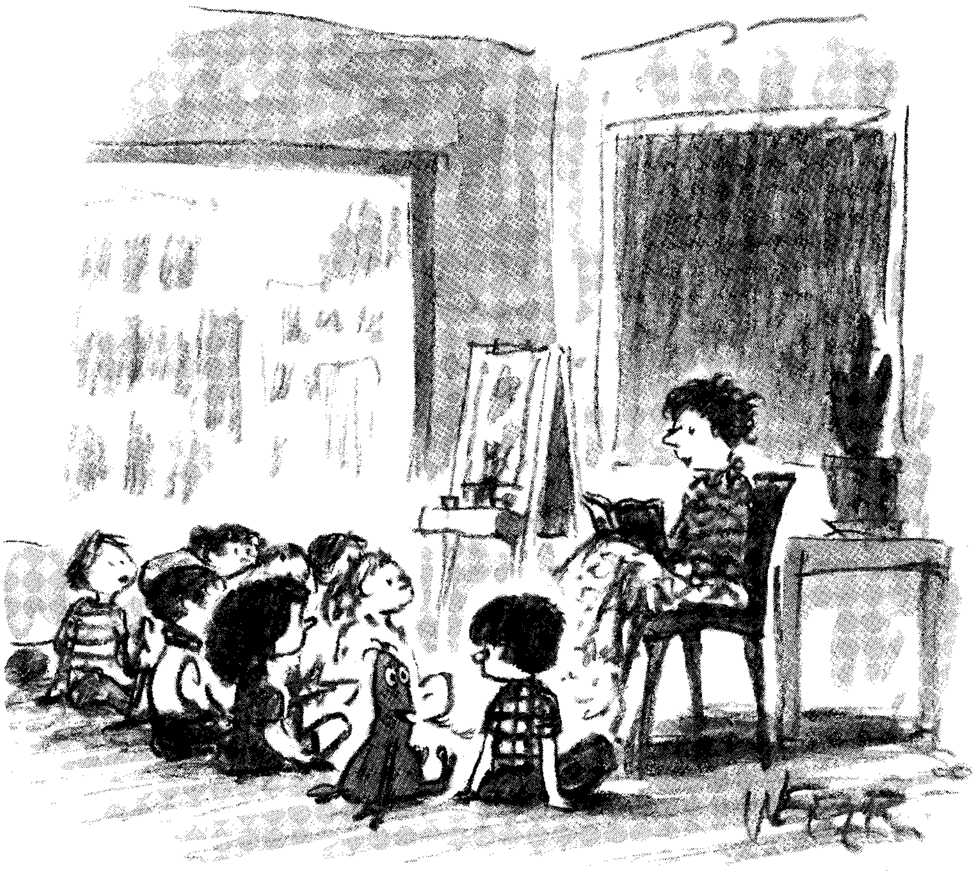
ENQUERI and I headed for the Shiripuno River, where ONHAE kept a funky canoe. Carved from a single tree trunk, it was about twenty feet long and two feet wide, and it was patched with bits of tin, cloth, leather, and, directly beneath me amidships, a one-litre plastic Coke bottle butterflied and flattened and nailed over a long crack.

The silt-brown Shiripuno slips slowly east into the green Cononaco, which, in turn, slips into the Curaray somewhere near the Peruvian border. On even the best maps of South America, this seventy-mile watershed is blank. Running with the current through a forest that grows ever richer, with parrots, turtles, caiman, monkeys, herons, the occasional harpy eagle, and even the golden flash of a jaguar, a canoe takes three days to reach the clearing where Quemperi and his clan have settled. It's about as far as one can go in the known Huao world, and we had to skirt the northern boundary of the territory hunted by the Tagaeri, the clan that killed Alejandro Labaca. Occasionally, there are rumors of a Tagaeri sighting, and it is said that in 1989, as Labaca had feared, the Company killed Tagae, the clan's leader. Beyond that, there has been no contact with them, but it is widely believed that they watch everything that happens on the Cononaco. "Sometimes you'll be walking in the forest and you'll hear a kissing sound not far away," a guide in Coca had told me. "That's the Tagaeri. But you'll never see them. They'll kill a noisy baby before they'll give themselves away."

Farther downriver, in the forty or so miles between Quemperi and the Peruvian border, there are said to be two more clans. Last year, a Company seismic crew were the first to spot a group thought to be the Taromenane. The other Huaorani clans maintain that the confrontation was violent, but the Company denies this, and, in any case, the Taromenane have not been seen again. The second group, the Oñamane, has never been reached; its existence is suggested only through the songs of the Huao elders.

As Enqueri and I drifted downriver, Huaorani appeared out of the forest in twos and threes, bearing children, shotguns, and pots of *chicha*, and after a momentary pause to twist my chest hairs or grab my crotch, and another moment to hiccup with laughter, they clambered aboard our canoe. Though it was soon filled beyond capacity, no one was refused. Time and again, Enqueri piloted us into rocks and snags, but only the boat's lone *cowode* seemed surprised or disturbed. With earsplitting shotgun blasts, an old man riding in the bow killed a guanta, a couple of woolly monkeys, and several turkeys, and throughout each of these messy affairs—the game was hauled in and cleaned, and blood coursed thickly through the canoe and coated my bare feet—the other Huaorani roared so enthusiastically with advice and approval that they nearly tipped the boat over.

Enqueri released the tiller only once all day, and that was to lace his hands on top of his head. "When a Huao sees a girl he likes, he drops one hand, like this," he said. "That means 'Meet me over there.' " Or he might point discreetly with a forefinger. "And, if you think a woman wants to make love with you, you wink your right eye to say yes and your left eye to say no." He winked his left eye. "But Enqueri can't close his right eye!" he said. He tried, grimacing with effort; his lid stuck like a jammed window shade. "See? It doesn't work. So Enqueri has a hard time getting women!" At this, he laughed so hard he doubled over. The canoe ran up on a submerged boulder and, with a sound like a gunshot, a crack five feet long opened in the floor. Water raced into the boat. Howling wildly, women reached under their skirts and ripped off their underwear, and men pulled small rocks from the river. They stuffed them



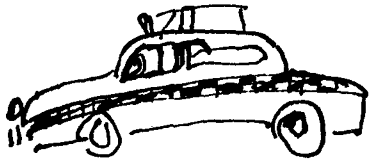
"I'm here on a grant."

into the void, then bailed and kept going. Soon the stories started. The Huaorani would be telling this one for days.

To my eye, the only sign that we had reached Quemperi's settlement was the sudden appearance along the right bank of some thirty Huaorani. They were standing in a long line: some held spears; some were naked. They neither waved nor spoke; they simply stared. After Enqueri and I climbed a fifteen-foot mud bank, a short, potbellied old man with a single tooth in the middle of his upper gum walked up to me, indicated that I should open my mouth, then tapped my teeth one by one. He said something in Huaorani, and a roar of laughter went up.

"Quemperi says welcome," Enqueri said. "He wants to know if you'll give him your teeth."

Until very recently, Quemperi and his clan roamed widely between the Cononaco River and the Yasuní, to the north, changing homesites every few months, alternating among half a dozen yucca gardens, and ferociously defending their hunting territory. A few years ago, however, they settled more or less permanently around an airstrip that the Company had built on this broad bend of the Cononaco. The *pista*, as it's called, was intended to be temporary, but the Huaorani are fastidious about keeping it free of brush. From their point of view, it's a kind of trap, really, which from time to time catches missionaries, tourists, or the Company. The *cowode* don't come often, but when they do they always bring gifts. Most Huaorani have never seen a car, a horse, or a bicycle, but the airplane has become as integral a part of their world as the blowgun, the banana, and the boar. They will have identified the make of an inbound craft long before a visitor can hear it coming ("Cessna!" they yell, racing for the *pista*), and, when the plane revs up to leave, the young Huao men plant themselves behind the tail, baring their chests to the fusillade of rock and dirt blasted their way by the prop wash.



Despite the *pista*, Quemperi and his clan live much as the Huaorani have lived for centuries. Though scabies and skin funguses are common, and phlegm-larded, tubercular hacks often split the night air, they are a healthy people—at least, compared with the Huaorani living in the protectorate. They long ago developed treatments for the illnesses indigenous to the area, and, because they have had only sporadic contact with the Company, they have avoided many of the viral infections that in the last twenty years have become the major cause of Huao death. Turkey, monkey, caiman, and boar are plentiful, and so is material for spears, blowguns, hammocks, and string bags. Nevertheless, life is often brutal. In his twenties, Enqueri had already reached middle age. Typically, the body of an adult Huao man will display half a dozen major scars, from staph infection, shotgun and outboard-motor accidents, falls, animal and snake bites. Many Huao are missing pieces of fingers and toes and large chunks of flesh, and in the entire adult population there is probably not a single full set of teeth.

There are ten houses around the *pista*, most of them of the traditional, thatched-A-frame design, with the roofs extending to dirt floors; they are cool and pleasant. When the Huaorani are not out hunting or gardening, or when it is raining, which is often (the first Huao phrase I learned was "It's wet around here"), they spend many hours in their hammocks. Sometimes they are resting, but usually they are working—sharpening a spear, perhaps, or braiding palm leaf into cord, or chewing yucca, which will be left to ferment into *chicha*. They talk constantly. Their material goods are few: a typical house will have a couple of machetes, a shotgun, some spears and blowguns, two or three cooking pots, and several hammocks. In fact, the Huaorani consider materialism impractical, because it isolates the individual from the group, and so makes survival more difficult.

A fire burns most of the day, and a visitor is always offered something—*chicha*, banana juice, a piece of boiled yucca, a smoked monkey arm. Some of the men, most of the women, and all the children go naked, or wear a thin strap about the groin. In older times, the entire clan slept in one big house, but now each household sleeps around its own fire. During the night, one or more of the adults will awaken and sing. The songs, rendered in a haunting three-note scale, and finished with a short, invigorating yodel, tell of hunting, travel, the history of the clan, war, love. A visitor, even a *cowode*, is welcome to sing; I sang about the first time I saw a monkey roasting on a fire, and how, as the skin shrank back from the skull, I thought I was watching a hideously grinning dwarf being burned alive.

I stayed with Quemperi, sleeping on his dirt floor, Huao style: wherever I happened to drop. Quemperi has a gentle disposition and a generous nature: he would never eat until I'd had my fill, and when he hunted he usually brought some grandkids along for instruction, and he always chuckled to himself while doing such quotidian tasks as making blowgun darts, weaving fresh leaves into his roof, and hauling water. But it would be foolhardy to think Quemperi anything less than a warrior. Around the fire, he spoke of killing Ecuadorian soldiers for their machetes, and Peruvian soldiers for their boots, and oil workers for their food and T-shirts, and Quichua for daring to cross the Napo into Huao land. Smiling, he told the story of Toña, one of the first Huaorani converted by Rachel Saint. Toña travelled to the Cononaco to preach to Quemperi, and brought with him an evil so strong that it killed a child. Quemperi asked Toña to help him make spears. When the spears were ready, Quemperi said, he and seven other Huao men turned on Toña and, one by one, thrust them home. Quemperi went last, using a spear that Toña himself had made.

QUEMPERI usually sat beside the fire when we spoke, but when he discussed the Conoco road he stood up and declaimed loudly and forcefully, sometimes stamping his feet for emphasis. It was the only time I saw him angry—indeed, it was the only time I saw any Huao angry—and the display was a frightening one. His rhetoric was direct: a road means bad hunting; game won't cross it; colonists will come and cut down the forest and kill the animals. A road, in other words, means hunger; it means the end of abundance, and the end of the self-reliance and independence the Huaorani value above all else.

The ninety-mile road that Conoco proposed to build, and along which it would develop all its hundred and twenty wells, would terminate in the heart of Quemperi's traditional hunting territory.

By then, it would have traversed the territory of the five or six clans that inhabit the area north of Quemperi, and it would have opened up to petroleum exploitation—by Conoco and by the growing list of companies counting on the infrastructure Conoco would build—the homelands of the Tagaeri, the Taromenane, and the Oñamane, if they exist. The dangers the road poses for the Huaorani are, of course, immense—exposure to a simple flu, for example, could wipe out the groups never before reached. To its credit, Conoco, while finishing its exploration phase, sent an anthropologist, James A. Yost, to speak with the Huaorani living in and around its concession. (Yost had been affiliated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and had worked among the Huaorani on and off for a decade.) In a report Yost told Conoco that although these Huaorani had already had some contact with *cowode*, mainly from oil exploration, their social, economic, and political structures had changed very little, because they had been able to absorb the inevitable changes on their own terms. He warned, however, that "to lose any more land or resources will result in deculturation and ethnocide."

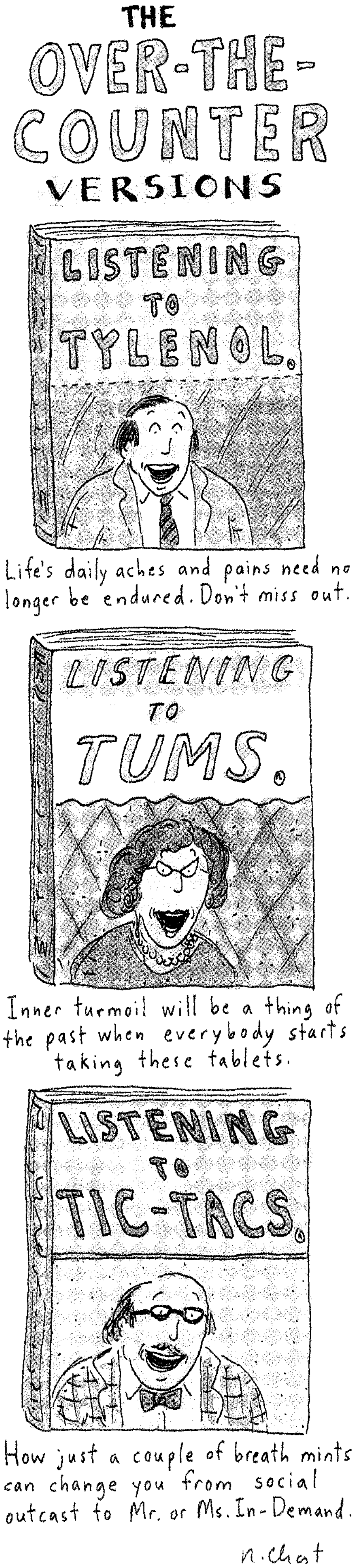
Yost's chief fear was colonization along the road, and Conoco had incorporated into its management plan such preventive measures as gates, guards, patrols, and satellite surveillance. But none of these measures had ever been tested. Obviously, there was no proof they would work. Conoco executives couldn't provide a single example of a road anywhere in the Oriente—indeed, anywhere in the Amazon—that had not been colonized.

Inevitably, in such discussions someone brings up the fact that colonization of the Conoco road would be illegal, because it would be inside the Huao reserve, but that point is never pursued with conviction. Even the Company recognizes that in Ecuador such laws, like many other good ones, are irrelevant, because the government has little inclination to enforce them. Colonization is illegal inside the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, which is about twenty miles north of the Huaorani, yet more than four thousand colonist families have settled along its oil roads since 1979 and the government has not made even a pretense of trying to remove them.

Dr. David Neill, an associate curator of the Missouri Botanical Garden, who is working in Ecuador, has been hired to catalogue and replant the forest that will be destroyed as the Block 16 road is built. In an interview, he started to describe his reforestation program, then stopped, let out a long sigh, and said, "Technically, our program might work—we can grow trees—but so what, if somebody comes in and cuts them down? I decided to work with the oil company because I thought that if I didn't it would be worse, but I'm not optimistic. The Ecuadorian economy is a shambles, and people need to survive. The colonists are going to go in there because they have no alternative." As for Yasuní National Park, which abuts the Huao territory and overlaps Block 16—and is of such immense biological importance that it has been declared a Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations—its future, he said, "is in grave doubt."

WALKING with little rest and no food, a Huao typically makes the seventy-five-mile trek from the Cononaco to the Yasuní, and Block 16, in two days. For this *cowode*, alas, it took three times that, even though my pack was considerably lighter than I'd planned: the first night out of Cononaco, I discovered that my Swiss Army knife, my compass, my emergency food supply, a pair of pants, a roll of duct tape, my extra socks, and my sandals had all been looted. Enqueri shouted with laughter. "The Huaorani," he said. "They're the *worst*." He had little sympathy for me. His travelling kit consisted, in its entirety, of a machete, a camouflage baseball hat, shin-high rubber boots, and the men's undershorts he'd bought in Coca.

"Green wall" is a phrase often used to describe Amazonian bush, but in all my wanderings in the Amazon I've never seen anything quite so wall-like as what we found when we reached Block 16. Great chunks of the forest had been cleared for seismic lines and helicopter pads, and the new understory had grown back so densely that it was impassable, even with the aid of a machete. It was a visceral demonstration of the impact, largely ignored but difficult to overstate, that seismic exploration has on the forest. The only independent environmental review ever made of an oil development in the Oriente (a study of an Arco concession) suggests that seismic exploration is enormously destructive, in part because it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is a system developed for use in far more arid regions. At intervals of one mile, ten-foot-wide trails are cut across the concession. Dynamite is detonated every three hundred yards along each of these trails, producing seismic waves that can be analyzed to determine the geological profile under the forest floor. Within the Arco concession, which can be considered typical, at least eight hundred miles of trails had been cut, and so had some fifteen hundred helicopter pads. According to Arco, three hundred and fifty-five acres of forest had been cleared; according to a bilateral commission composed of Quichua and Petroecuador officials, the total was at least seven times that. In interviews, local people reported that the noise made by the clearing and the explosions had scared away much of the game, and that the new understory growth had inhibited its return. (Fructivores—toucans, monkeys, turkeys—won't move into cleared areas, and their absence means not only a loss of game but less regeneration of the forest, because these species distribute the seeds of the large fruiting trees.) The Quichua who live near the Arco block had been so angered that they pressured the seismic crew into stopping their work. When Company officials came to speak with the Quichua, expecting to stay for a few hours, they were held there for a week. ("But we fed them very well," one of the Quichua women told me.) Later, armed with machetes and shotguns, the Quichua marched on the Arco site, only to be turned back by the military.

Cutting seismic trails is the hardest physical work in the exploration process, and the Company usually hires Indians to do it. Like many of the younger Huao men, Enqueri had once worked on a seismic crew; he had, in fact, worked on a crew that had explored Block 16. "I needed money," he told me. "When we are sick, the *evangélicos* take us to their hospital. They make us pay, and once when I was gone on a trip my sister went to the hospital." When Enqueri got home, he learned that he owed the hospital the equivalent of about six months' pay at the prevailing national minimum wage, or about a hundred and eighty dollars. He went to work for the Company. "I had a ninety-day contract," he said. "I worked from six in the morning until six at night, cutting the forest. I worked seven days a week. The Company gave us a machete and boots, and the helicopter would drop beans and rice. After work, we cut a clearing and put up a tarp. I worked with other Huaorani; we all slept together. There was a lot of malaria, and someone was always being hurt—cutting off a finger or getting chopped by a machete or axe. But if you didn't work you didn't get paid. When we asked for better treatment, the Company said we didn't deserve it, because we were uncivilized."

"My mother sends you her remorse."

We spent most of a day weaving in and out of Block 16. Eventually, we arrived at a muddy river, and Enqueri announced that the trail he'd been following had ended.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"It means we are lost," he said.

"And what does that mean?"

"It means we might die."

The Huaorani pride themselves on being able to travel as long as ten days without food, and since we left Quemperi we had eaten almost nothing. Foolishly, we had brought no hunting weapons, and after our long trek I was dizzy with hunger. I was so weak, in fact, that a few minutes later, when a furious storm broke on us, I went into hypothermia. I shook uncontrollably with cold. Enqueri wrapped his arms around me until the storm passed and I had warmed up enough to sit still. Then, with his machete, he chopped down a balsa tree, split it into logs, and built a raft, tying the logs with vine. We put the raft in the river, and for the next two days we drifted at about a mile an hour. We hoped that the river would drain into the Yasuní, but it was just as likely to run southeast into Peru, through territory uninhabited even by the Huaorani, and in that case we would not find help for weeks. My hunger had become physically painful—my stomach felt as if it were being ripped open from the inside out—and I was certain I wouldn't live that long.

Late in the afternoon on our second day adrift, I heard the far-off sound of a branch snapping; only when it was followed by the fuzzy but unmistakable hum of an outboard motor did I understand that it was a gunshot, and that we were being rescued. As Enqueri had said, you can't hide anything from the Huaorani. Our hero was a grinning young man named Araba, the leader of a Yasuní clan and an old friend of Enqueri's. Assisted by three whooping clansmen, he lifted us into a long canoe piled high with boar and monkey and yucca and bananas. I boarded cautiously, not so much from fatigue—though that was one reason—as from awe, doubting the reality of each moment.

We ate pig like pigs, and for the next few days Araba ferried us up and down the Yasuní to visit with clans. Then he took us to his community—Garzacocha, near Yasuní National Park. According to Enqueri's census, there are a hundred and forty-one Huaorani living in or around Block 16, or roughly a tenth of the total Huao population. All along the Yasuní River, we met Huaorani who described, in detail, a spill on the river from an exploratory well. The spill probably occurred in 1989. (It's hard to tell exactly, because the Huaorani living along the upper Yasuní are the area's least acculturated, and have no concept of *cowode* weeks, months, or years.) They had become sick, and rashes had covered their skin; dead fish were floating in the river, and their yucca gardens had died. The Company, they said, ignored the spill. (A Conoco spokesman in Ecuador subsequently denied that the spill had occurred.)

As we canoed downriver toward the Napo (sunk to the gunwales with Huaorani along for the ride), we entered Yasuní National Park, which the Huaorani consider their land, and which they depend upon for basic resources. We passed a sign prohibiting hunting, fishing, logging, and colonization in the park. There was a guardhouse next to the sign, and it bore, in large, bold letters, the logo of the Nature Conservancy. (The United States Agency for International Development has selected the Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation International, and CARE to administer a fifteen-million-dollar program of park management, tourism, and "sustainable resource" extraction in Yasuní and two other ecological reserves.) Though it was midday and the height of the tourist season, the guardhouse was empty. "The guard is on vacation," Araba said. "He doesn't come here very often." Did Araba recognize the name of the group? "Yes," he said. "It's part of the Company." After we beached the canoe, the Huaorani broke into the guardhouse, ate all the food they could find, drank a bottle of rum, and threw their garbage in the river. Later, they walked around the exterior, ripping at the siding lumber to see if any of it would be worth taking home.

"Hey, do any of you guys want to start a gang?"

• •

ONE night during our return voyage to Coca, we made camp at an abandoned *chacra*, a Quichua garden, on the north bank of the Napo. A Quichua man spotted our fire and invited us to his home, explaining that the *chacra's* owner had died of malaria, and that his ghost still haunted the land. "And you are Huaorani," he said nervously, shining his flashlight on Enqueri and Araba. They said nothing. "You used to kill." Turning to me, he said, "One day when I was a child, the Huaorani came with their spears and killed everyone in my family—the men, the women, even the children. There was blood everywhere. It was a slaughter. I hid in a hole, and they didn't find me. I was the only one who survived." He turned back to Enqueri. "But now you're civilized," he said. He reached out and patted Enqueri lightly on the arm, as if he were an apparition. "You're civilized, aren't you?"

WHEN, after a month in the forest, Enqueri and I finally reached Coca, we found the entrance to the Capuchin mission blocked by a military patrol. The mission school had been requisitioned by the military so that its representatives, those of Conoco and Petroecuador, and Valerio Grefa could meet with Nanto and Moi to discuss Robert Kennedy's proposal, which was being referred to as the Río Napo Foundation. The Capuchins, who have consistently tried to help the Huaorani, had refused to participate.

That night, I had dinner with Moi. What was the meeting about?

"The Company wants to know how much we will take for our land," he said. "We said we would like enough to buy a home for the next five thousand years."

The meeting ended in a stalemate, and a few weeks later Valerio Grefa approached Nanto and Moi one last time. The Huaorani turned him down cold. Within days, Conoco announced that it was pulling out of the Oriente and selling its share of the concession to its partner Maxus Energy, which is based in Dallas. Maxus Energy used to be the Diamond Shamrock Corporation, which dumped so much dioxin into New Jersey's Passaic River that in 1983 it began one of the most expensive cleanups in the state's history. It's still going on.

As time went on, I grew skilled at sneaking into the Huao territory, but the easiest entry I ever made was a matter of dumb luck. I flew in from the town of Shell. Perched in the Andean foothills seventy miles from the western edge of the territory, Shell was founded by Royal Dutch/Shell in the nineteen-forties, when both the Company and the California-based Mission Aviation Fellowship began their forays into the Huao lands. The oil company is long gone, but the missionaries were fruitful and multiplied, and now it is from the Shell airport that most of the Oriente's small-plane traffic originates. Huaorani are always lurking around the airport. Alas de Socorro ("Wings of Help"), a Latin-American affiliate of the M.A.F., charges them a discount rate for their flights. For the Huaorani, "discount," like most financial concepts, is illusory, and some of them have run up accounts that their grandchildren will be paying off. Still, they invariably leave the territory when there's an empty seat to be had on an outbound Alas flight. It's too much fun. Later, they collect in Shell waiting for a ride home, or to anywhere else on earth.

When I walked into the Alas hangar, Huaorani were climbing over the desk and laughing at the pilots and poking into bags and snatching the sunglasses off the red-eyed dispatcher, a white man who looked as if he'd dropped in from Kansas. Rain was blasting the hangar roof like buckshot, and the radio was screeching, and planes were roaring down the runway one after another. As in almost every collision between *cowode* and Huaorani, the chaos was colossal. It was so colossal, in fact, that the harried dispatcher mistook me for a Christian. He hustled me out the door toward a six-seater bound right then for Toñampare. "Praise the Lord!" he said, waving me aboard.

The cleft-chinned young pilot rested his hand on the steering shaft and bowed his head. "O Lord," he prayed, "guide me in my decisions." Then he taxied through fog and mist and lifted us through gray into a sky of bright blue. Bouncing like a hobby horse, we banked east. Below us, the clouds thinned to tall plumes rising like smoke, and we thrummed over shaved red earth and waxy green coffee plantations. As Shell faded away, a few trees became many trees, then a vast green carpet of trees stretching to infinity.

We picked up the twisty, coffee-and-cream line of the Curaray River—the same line that Nate Saint had followed thirty-five years earlier. Nate, physically disqualified from flying for the Air Force, had elected to fly for the Lord, and he opened up the Huao territory with a clever, and dangerous, technique called the "bucket drop," hand-lowering a bucket of goodies into the green hell below so precisely, and so steadily, that the Huaorani could loot it: contact.

We followed the Curaray for half an hour, until a patch of bare ground opened like a dun wound in green skin and we landed skidding on mud. This strip has made Toñampare, a shantytown of tin-roofed shacks, the principal port of entry for *cowode* riches, and it is where the Huaorani have settled in the largest numbers. In the middle of the village is a radio transceiver, strapped onto a tall tree stump and encased in a crude open-walled wooden box that is surrounded by wire mesh, so the Huaorani can't steal it. It's powered by a solar panel mounted high in a nearby tree, and, except when a local condor takes up an extended stay on the panel and decommissions the system, the radio squawks all day long. Each day starts with a Bible story.

Next to the radio is a tiny porcelain crapper tucked into a tiny shed. The Huaorani never use it. The only other flush toilet in the entire twenty-six hundred square miles of the territory is about twenty feet away, hidden inside a mesh-enclosed wooden house that looks as if it could have been lifted directly from the Pennsylvania farmlands that gave birth to

MAYBE THERE'S NO GOING BACK

Used to be he
was my heart's desire.
His forthright gaze,
his expert hands:

I'd lie on the couch with my eyes
closed just thinking about it.
Never about the fact
that everything changes,

that even this,
my best passion,
would not be immune.
No, I would bask on in an

eternal daydream of the hands
finding me, the gaze like a winding
stair coaxing me down . . .
Until I caught a glimpse

of something in the mirror:
silly girl in her lingerie,
dancing with the furniture—
a hot little bundle, flush with

clichés. Into that pair
of too-bright eyes I looked
and saw myself. And something else:
he would never look that way.

—Deborah Garrison

its inhabitant, Rachel Saint. The radio, of course, is Rachel's work, as are the toilets, and a chapel next to her house, and a small bronze plaque beside the chapel. The plaque commemorates her brother, who was killed on the banks of the Curaray, within shouting distance of the only home Rachel Saint has known for the last fifteen years.

Though I was staying within a stone's throw of Rachel's house, I was in Toñampare three days before I saw her. I'd come to find Enqueri, but he wasn't there. His friend Salomón met me at the plane and said that Enqueri had taken off down the Curaray, in a canoe, on a wedding voyage. His bride-to-be was thirteen years old. It was, Salomón said, Enqueri's fifth attempt at marriage.

Salomón let me sleep on the floor of his shack, which had all the ambience of a henhouse, including hens. It was across the clearing from Rachel's place. Every day, I heard her voice ringing out over the airwaves, and every day she sent me a note via a Huao runner. One note accompanied a chunk of venison: "The Aucas killed this for you. I'm sorry you'll have to eat it their way. I prefer it fried." "Their way" meant boiled.

Finally, late one misty afternoon, I looked across and saw an immense, and immensely white, figure staring fixedly in my direction. Rachel Saint is a tall woman. She is taller than any Huaorani, stooped not at all by her seventy-nine years, and is not only tall but wide. Her size is surely an advantage in a culture that so values physical prowess, and she is made larger still by the soft lines of the pastel blouses and skirts that she favors. Her white hair was pulled back in a tight bun, and she peered from behind glasses with eyes that seemed as pale blue as ice. To the Huaorani, certainly, they are every bit as rare. They betrayed no emotion.

Our eyes met, briefly. Then she turned slowly, and slowly climbed the steps back into her house and shut the door. I went over and knocked.

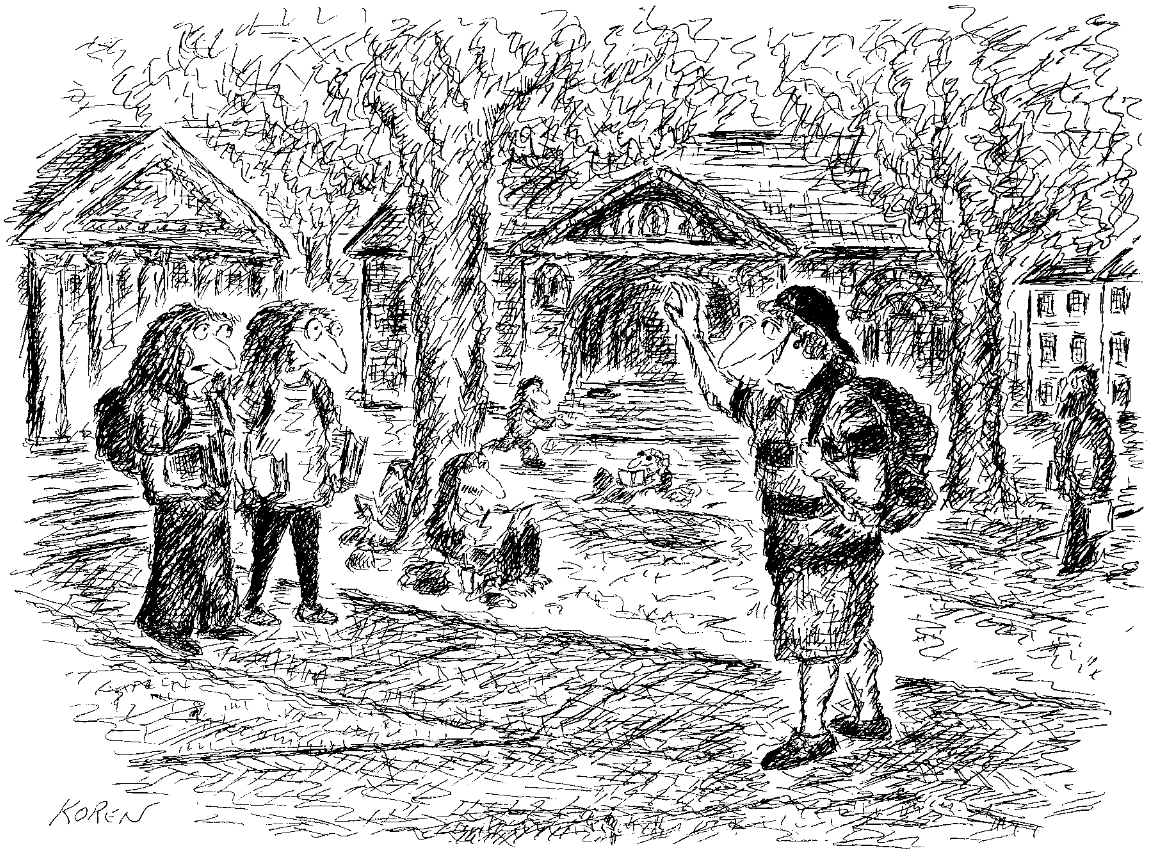
"Would you like some tapioca pudding?" she asked.

RACHEL SAINT came to Ecuador in 1955. She was "saved" at fifteen, went to Bible college, and then spent twelve years working with alcoholics in New Jersey, and five more translating the Word for Piro and Shapra Indians in Peru. She was forty-two years old when she took up her true calling, among the Aucas, working with a runaway Huao woman named Dayuma, whom she discovered "living like a slave" at a plantation in the Oriente. Most of Dayuma's clan had been slaughtered by other Huaorani, and the two women found a bond in their grief. Dayuma taught Rachel Huaorani; Rachel taught Dayuma about the Lord. In 1957, she brought Dayuma to the United States. They went onstage with Billy Graham; they appeared on "This Is Your Life"; they raised gobs of money. By the time they returned to Ecuador, Rachel was the most famous missionary in the world.

The Mission Aviation Fellowship, meanwhile, had continued its forays into the Huao homeland, and in October of 1958 Rachel and Dayuma went in on foot, hacking their way through the forest for days until they found what was left of Dayuma's clan. Rachel became the first missionary to sleep in the territory and live to tell about it. She and Dayuma established a settlement, and with radios and airplanes Rachel conjured machetes and shirts and pants and candy and rice. Lured by these riches, Huao clans came calling. Dayuma persuaded them to give up their nomadic ways; Rachel delivered the message of El Señor.

Rachel became Dayuma's clan sister: Nemo, she was called, the Huaorani word for star. They built their homes side by side, and to the *cowode* world Rachel presented Dayuma as the leader of the Huaorani. The Company showed them where it wanted to explore for oil; Rachel and Dayuma moved the clans out and brought them into the tiny "protectorate" they had persuaded the government to create, in 1969. Desperate to colonize the Oriente as rapidly as possible, the government put the Summer Institute of Linguistics in charge of Huao health and education, and Rachel bent herself to her contracted task of making the Aucas "useful citizens."

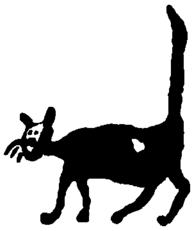
Things began to unravel in 1973,



"That's the famous Josh—a high-impact body harboring a very low-impact mind."

when the S.I.L. sent James Yost, the Christian anthropologist, to study the Huaorani. He came away dismayed. Rachel Saint, he said, had tried to turn the culture upside down: she had tried to convert it into a matriarchy and install Dayuma as its queen. (To this day, Rachel Saint refers to the protectorate as "Dayuma's land.") The Institute asked Rachel to leave the Huaorani; instead, she left the S.I.L. (In 1981, the government outlawed the S.I.L. itself.) Rachel left the territory in 1979, but she returned within two years, with ten dollars to her name and the backing only of a small church in Oklahoma. She was sixty-seven. Although she keeps an apartment in Quito, and goes there every few months, she has never really left the Huaorani again. "If you took Rachel out of the territory, it would kill her," one of her fellow-missionaries told me. "She has no husband and no children. The Aucas are her family. She's so tied to them that she's"—and here he pounded his fists together—"*ungovernable*."

Inside Rachel's house are a radio transceiver, a kitchen sink and counter, dishes drying in a rack, a propane stove. A solar panel provides electricity. There is no refrigerator. "The law is, you can ask a relative for everything and the relative has to give it to you," she told me, speaking slowly. "If I had a refrigerator, I'd just have to keep it filled for Dayuma." A small bookcase holds copies of the Bible, wrapped in plastic against the humidity, and five copies of a book about her in French. A blowgun and a fishnet hang on one wall; on another are aging black-and-white photographs of the Huaorani. She waved me toward a rocking chair and brought pudding, then collapsed into a hammock slung across the middle of the house and stretched out her long, pale legs, which were covered with insect bites. Scratching at the bites, she apologized for seeming tired: she had spent the last twelve hours in a malarial fever. Around her throat she wore a necklace with a single jaguar tooth. The roundness of the tooth, she said, indicated that it came from an old cat. "It was so old it couldn't kill anymore," she said. "Just like me."



For some reason that probably had to do with the sudden outbreak of incurable diseases brought in by the *cowode* and with the Huao custom of avenging all deaths, there was a wave of intratribal killing in the middle of this century, and that was what had driven Dayuma to flight. When she and Rachel returned to the territory, twelve years later, only forty of her clan's two hundred members were still alive. "They were committing ethnic suicide," Rachel told me. "When a child died, they'd go to their witch doctors to find out who to blame, and there would be reprisal killings. They stopped the killings when we showed them the way of peace. So when an anthropologist accuses me of destroying the culture—well, if I told you how mad that made me, you'd have to write it on asbestos paper. *Destroying* the culture? I'm the one who saved it."

She had been told by the Huaorani—"by my sources on the inside," as she likes to put it—that I'd been to see Quemperi. "You were lucky to get out alive," she said. "You go there at the wrong time, your life isn't worth a plugged nickel. The only Auca you can trust is a Christian Auca. The ones over on that Catholic side are all savages. Pure savages. I can't think of any other word for people who kill their own kind." She added, "Of course, you can't help but like them. They're the most charming killers there ever was."

Several Huaorani were hovering at the foot of the steps outside her house, talking quietly among themselves. A man shouted at us from what was now the inky darkness of the forest night; I recognized the terms "Auca" and "Huaorani." Rachel shouted back to him in his own tongue. "He's saying they're Huaorani, not Aucas," she said. "But they're Aucas. Always have been. I told him he should be proud of that—there's a soccer team in Quito named the Aucas." She got up and tossed a bar of soap in the direction of the voice. "That *Huaorani*"—she arched her eyebrows—"wants to wash his Auca clothes."

I had expected someone stern and reproving, but Rachel Saint seemed kind—kind and lonely and touched with regret. It seemed painfully obvious that by any measure—emotional, physical, material—her brand of fundamentalist Christianity and her remaking of the culture in her own image have been a net loss for the Huaorani. Toñampare is a slum. So many Huaorani have crowded into it that there is virtually no hunting. They are visibly less healthy than those who live in more traditional ways. They are dependent on goods brought in from outside, and many of them have become wage slaves to a culture they can never hope to be truly a part of—to a culture that, in fact, considers them little more than animals. And it was Rachel Saint who did so much to help open up the Vía Auca.

It may have been a mistake to trust the Oil, she now concedes. (She uses "the Oil" the way the Huaorani use "the Company.") The Oil flew Dayuma into Shell to sign a contract to work the Auca lands, but "they lied to her," Rachel Saint explained. "They told her they'd crossed out the parts giving them permission to build roads, but they hadn't really, and she can't read Spanish." The Oil brought alcohol and prostitution, which made the Huaorani "demon-possessed"; worse, it brought roads and colonists and epidemics.

Maxus, however, is a different story. Like Rachel, William Hutton, the general manager of Maxus's Ecuadorian operations, is an evangelical Christian, and he had already provided funding for a secondary school in Toñampare; Rachel was coördinating its construction and staffing with the Christian mission in Quito. "Bill Hutton's a good Christian man," she said. "And he says he's an environmentalist, too."

To her critics, the tone of Rachel Saint's work was set by one of the first bands of "wild Aucas" she brought into her protectorate. Almost immediately, all hundred and four contracted polio. Sixteen died; sixteen were crippled. "You have to ask how many more would have been killed if we hadn't brought them here," she says now. "How can you let your brother die without giving him a chance at peace? The tribal dictates—you might as well call them the Devil's dictates. When you put aside the Ten Commandments, you have pure chaos, and that's what we had here with the Aucas. You had husbands marrying two sisters. You had brothers sleeping with their brothers' wives. Sometimes a man would marry a mother and a daughter. You had your free-love fiestas, where anybody slept with anybody. Pretty soon, a father has kids in five places. A boy grows up, he wants to marry a girl, and he finds out she's his sister! If you don't think that's chaos, you haven't read your Old Testament."

Rachel is still determined to straighten out one of the hotter hotbeds of Auca chaos—the Tagaeri. She said she hopes to reach them before anyone else, particularly the Capuchins; the Maxus project should greatly increase her chances of access. Alejandro Labaca had had his chance, and he had blown it: "I think he wanted to be a martyr." She ridiculed the Capuchin philosophy of eschewing religious conversion for political activism ("They say they're trying to save the land for the Indians. I say save the Indians for the land"), and she chose to ignore the fact that Labaca's death had led to the sort of victory that had always eluded her: temporarily, at least, the government suspended oil development in the Tagaeri land. What seemed to bother her most about the Capuchins, though, was a much reproduced photograph of a young nun, Sister Inés, who was killed with Labaca. In the photograph, Inés is cooking soup for several Huaorani. "The Catholics claim that the Aucas liked Inés, that they were friendly with her," Rachel said. "But I happen to know that's not true." Although no one else in a hundred miles spoke English, she leaned over and whispered in my ear: "My sources on the inside say they *peed* in her soup pot."

ON Sunday, at Rachel's invitation, I went to services. Of the three hundred-odd Huaorani living in Toñampare, eleven had made it to chapel. One man was in a wheelchair, and another had a polio-crippled leg; a third was on crutches. It's fair to say that four decades of tilling the Huao field has yielded a slim crop. The Huaorani are no more Christians than they are Jews, or Muslims, or Buddhists; Rachel Saint's relationship with them is one not of shared faith but of power and reward. For years, she controlled Huao dealings with the government and the Company, and, to a great extent, she continues to control the radio, the air traffic, and the entry of outside goods and services, including what few health workers and medical supplies find their way to Toñampare. (Later, I asked one of the worshippers what Rachel did, and he said, "She asks God for things.") Christian missionaries still control the secondary school that Maxus has built. CONFENIAE accused the S.I.L. of using its schools to eradicate tra-

FINALLY, TODAY, PRESIDENT CLINTON HAS REVEALED HIS LONG-AWAITED HEALTH-CARE PACKAGE.
Risko

ditional indigenous culture, but Rachel has not backed down. "I have warned the people to stay away from such dangerous organizations," she says. "They're Communists."

The impression that Rachel Saint is Toñampare's Big Nurse was reinforced by the looks and manner of the young man who stood at the front of the chapel preaching the Gospel. He spoke mainly in Huaorani, but he slipped into Spanish to deliver admonitions against drinking and dancing. Rachel sat to one side, impassive, but the man was clearly nervous, stuttering from time to time and shooting her sidelong glances. He was an odd-looking Huaorani. It wasn't simply that he wore dentures. No, what was strange was that he wore glasses: I'd never seen them on a Huaorani.

Suddenly, I realized that the man I was watching was Enqueri.

"Credit!" he told me later, gleefully, by way of explanation. He had gone to the Christian hospital in Shell for the choppers and specs. "Now maybe Enqueri will get a woman!" he said. He grinned broadly, and held the grin. What about his marriage? That hadn't worked out—on the second day of the wedding voyage he'd accidentally tipped the canoe and dumped his young fiancée and all his shotgun shells. He'd left her there on the bank, camping with her brothers.

OVER time, I began to appreciate the enormous odds that the Huaorani have overcome to start ONHAE, and to make it function. There is Rachel Saint, for one; then, there is the daunting prospect of holding such a farflung organization together without benefit of telephones, radio, mail, efficient transportation, or funds. During a week when Enqueri was down with malaria, I joined the rest of the ONHAE braintrust—Nanto, Moi, and Amo—on a journey to Moi's village, Quehueriono, for an *asamblea.*

Quehueriono lies at the extreme opposite end of the territory from Cononaco and Garzacocha, the settlements I had visited with Enqueri. Situated at the territory's western edge, Quehueriono serves as a sentinel against the influx of the Quichua, from the north and west, and the Shuar, down the Vía Auca, and the Company, which is pressing in on all sides. From the Vía Auca, it takes about a day to reach Quehueriono by motorized canoe. The village is hidden on the upper Shiripuno River, in the undulating terrain where the Amazon meets the Andes, and the journey is breathtaking: volcanic peaks bursting above mist-shrouded rivers. It is in this region, where two distinct climatic zones join, that the Oriente is at its richest. Thirty million years ago, the Oriente was an embayment of the Pacific Ocean. Four and a half million years ago, the Andes thrust up from the earth, creating finely subdivided habitats—deep valleys separated by high ridges, with microclimates that changed radically over short distances. Consequently, plants, and the insects and birds and other creatures that evolved with them, were isolated. This situation encouraged such intense speciation that today, in its endemism—the presence of species that exist nowhere else—the Oriente is probably the richest place in the world. (At a single research station not far from Quehueriono, observers have recorded four hundred and ninety species of birds, or almost two-thirds as many as are found in the continental United States.) Each bend in the river reveals rolling hills, and near Quehueriono itself these are steep, a prelude to the great mountains. There is a sense of seclusion even within Quehueriono—one home is rarely visible from another—and it may be the prettiest of all the Huao settlements, which is saying something. The river runs clear green over rock, and its water is sweet and translucent.

It is here in Quehueriono that the Huaorani met in 1990 to form their federation. "I worked for the Company for four years, cutting line," Moi said. "I met some Quichua on the lines, and got to be friends with them, and they took me to meet a Quichua man named Leonardo Viteri. He taught me about organizing; he made me see that I was helping the Company to destroy my home. That was when I got the idea to start ONHAE." Moi, in fact, had invited to the *asamblea* the leaders of three Quichua villages near the Vía Auca that were affected by oil development, and they had responded with enthusiasm. "No one is going to help us," one of them said, "so we have to get together and help ourselves."

At the end of the day's canoe journey—during which Moi would rise to his feet every hour or so and broadcast into the forest wall, "Come to the *asamblea* tomorrow! Lots of *chicha!*"—we arrived in Quehueriono to find the settlement jammed with some three hundred Huaorani, from as far away as Garzacocha, a journey of at least two weeks. ONHAE *asambleas* are held every few months. This one met for three days, from dawn to dark, in a great hall in the middle of the village; the meetings continued until everyone who wished to speak had spoken.

Nanto and Moi took turns presiding. As vice-president, Moi had the job of moving the agenda along. Nanto was the orator. "The Huaorani live well and will continue to live well," he said, to open the meeting, "because we are the bravest people in the Amazon and we will defend our land." Unlike Moi, he is a husband and father, and what matters to him above all else is a safe home and food to eat. Tall and strong, with high cheekbones and wide brown eyes, he would be considered handsome in almost any culture. Nanto had never struck me as a politician—he has no heart for posturing. But he's a superior hunter, fisherman, and *motorista* (the outboard motor was only recently introduced to the Huaorani, but Nanto quickly became adept at using it), and in a culture that is still closely attuned to the often harsh life of the rain forest these skills command respect.

Resolutions, passed by majority vote during the *asamblea*, addressed education (the Huaorani want schools and a bilingual-education program), tourism (they're against it, unless they control it), and health care (they will ask the government to fund a program to train their own people as health workers). The dominant topics, however, were colonization and the Company. "We are opposed to oil development, but we also know that it can't be stopped," Moi told me after one day's talk had ended and the night's dancing had begun. "What we want is a moratorium. We believe that ten years is reasonable. Right now, everything is happening too quickly. There is no control, and no one is watching out for the Huaorani. We want the Company to stop, to make an inventory of the damage that has been done so far, and to come up with a serious plan to limit damage in the future. We think that's fair."

Meanwhile, colonization is advancing steadily from the Vía Auca up the Shiripuno, almost entirely in the form of Shuar. Amo, despite the boldness of his gold-inlaid front tooth, was the most soft-spoken of the ONHAE officers—to hear him, I often had to stick my ear within inches of his mouth—but he was also the one most vulnerable to the Shuar aggression. Because, as secretary, he had the job of walking among the villages to deliver messages, and of travelling to Coca with correspondence, he was constantly exposed to attack. "Whenever I walk out to the road from here, the Shuar threaten me," he said. "They demand that we give them some of our territory. The older Huaorani don't want to fight them, but Nanto and Moi and I and many of the other younger men do want to. They have to be stopped, now."

Amo was interested, and pleased, to hear that the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund had petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (the human-rights section of the Organization of American States) to censure the Ecuadorian government for allowing oil exploration in Huaorani territory. The names meant nothing to him, but the petition cited the U.N. definition of ethnocide, and he had no trouble understanding that: "It means the Company is going to kill us." He was ready to move forward: "If they are our lawyers, we must invite them to come and meet us."

Did he know what a lawyer was?

"Yes. It is someone who speaks for you when you cannot speak for yourself."

Nanto and Moi decided that Amo would return with me to Coca, borrow a typewriter from the Capuchin mission, carry it into the territory on his back, and type an invitation to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, which would be signed by the other officers. With luck, Amo would have time to squeeze in a visit to his village, to see his wife and their two-month-old baby girl. He would then travel to Quito, to my apartment there, because I was the only person ONHAE knew who could get the letter to the United States.

The next day, Amo led me out to the Vía Auca on foot. We walked for twelve hours, eating nothing until we made camp in a clearing near the Shiripuno bridge, where he produced a mound of rice wrapped in a banana leaf. He refused to take any himself. In the morning, we flagged down an oil truck, and in Coca we shared a coconut. I drew Amo a rough map of Quito, marking my apartment, and gave him the fare for the thirteen-hour bus ride. Then I bade him good luck.

AMO never made it to Quito. He got on the jitney that picks up Indians and colonists along the Vía Auca. Nanto and another Huao, a man called Pancho, were inside the vehicle; Amo was riding on the roof, as he often did. One way or another, he fell off. Nanto and Pancho saw Amo drop from the roof, and shouted for the driver to stop; the driver slowed, Nanto and Pancho hit the ground on the fly, and the driver sped away. For two hours, Amo lay by the road unconscious but alive; suddenly, he sat up, vomited blood, said, "My head hurts," and died. Four hours later, a pickup truck from the Capuchin mission arrived and took the body to Coca. There was no investigation, by either the military or the police. A doctor who later examined Amo's body—but refused to do an autopsy, for fear the Huaorani would blame him for the death and exact revenge—told one of the Capuchin priests that Amo landed on his head with such force that a small stone was driven through his skull and lodged in his throat.

The Huaorani do not believe that Amo fell accidentally. Though Nanto says there is some possibility that Amo was hexed by a witch, he endorses the more widely held Huao belief that Amo was shot in the head by a Shuar colonist who was on the roof with him. "I heard the dead man"—Amo—"screaming," Nanto said. "Then I heard a sound like a gunshot. When I looked out the window, he was flying off the roof. He wasn't falling, trying to grab things as he went—he was flying."

Babae and his clan live about an hour's walk from the scene of the accident, and several of the clan members saw Amo's body. "He had a round hole in the back of his head, and the hair around it was burned," Babae's wife said. "It was a small hole, like the hole a bullet makes in a boar, and you could see the place in his throat where something was trying to push through. How would a stone get all the way down there?"

Nanto said that he hadn't insisted on an autopsy, because ONHAE had no money to pay for one; not until two weeks later, when he met with Judith Kimerling, did he understand that the police were obligated to make a complete investigation of the death. By then, however, Amo had been buried.

Until a new election could be held, Enqueri would assume Amo's duties as secretary of ONHAE. He was scared and angry. The death, he pointed out, had occurred near the offices of the Shuar colonists' association. "I believe that the Shuar had an arrangement with the bus driver," he said. "It was an assassination. The Shuar had told the dead man they were going to kill him if he didn't give them land. When I walked out of the territory to help bring his body back, the Shuar stopped me and said, 'We're going to do to you what we did to the dead man.' I told them they would have to kill all the Huaorani before they would get our land. I was alone, or I would have fought them right there."

In May of last year, Nanto and Moi went to the Maxus offices in Quito. Moi, having learned a thing or two, brought a tape recorder. With the tape recorder running, they told William Hutton, the general manager of Maxus's Ecuadorian operations, that they wanted copies of the Block 16 management plan. They warned Hutton to keep Maxus away from the Huaorani, and said that they especially wanted to have nothing to do with a staff sociologist named Rossana Faieta, whose job it was to secure a contract with the Huaorani. Hutton said, "O.K."

According to Nanto, one week later, Rossana Faieta arranged to meet Nanto in Coca. She flew with him by helicopter to Quemperi's *pista*, and there she tried to get him to persuade Quemperi to accept the road. Quemperi refused. In September, Faieta brought Nanto and two other Huaorani to Quito, sat them down in the Maxus offices, and got them to sign an agreement, written in Spanish, that read, in its entirety:

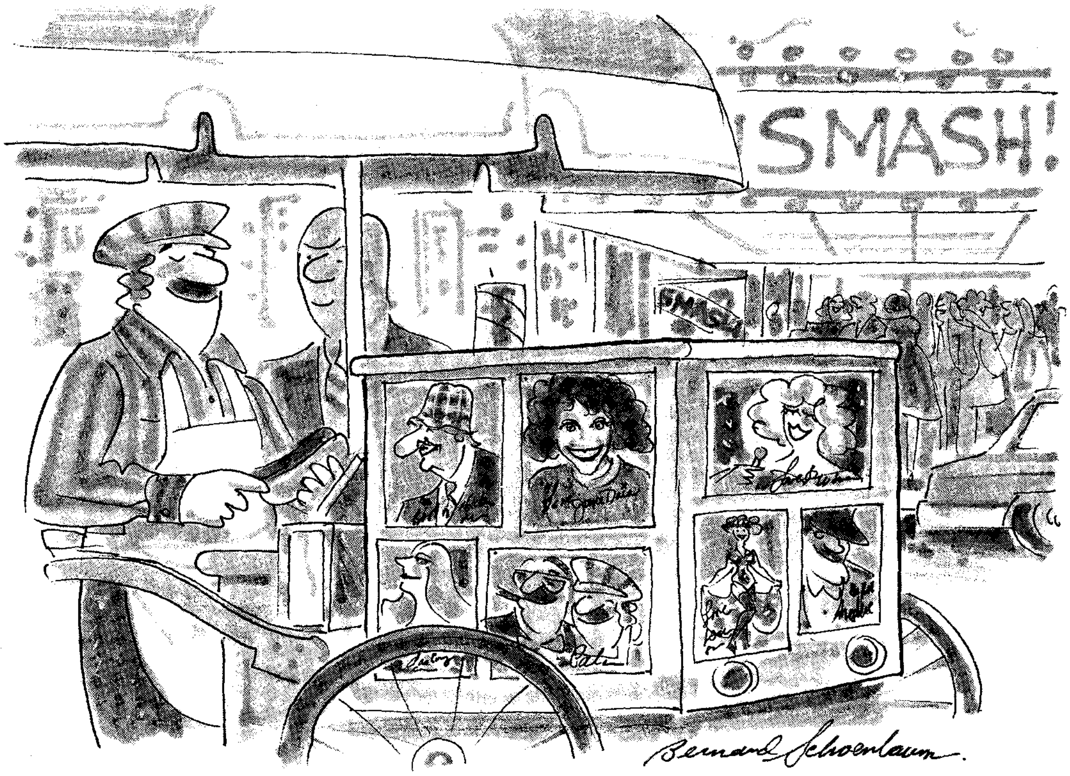
> Today, the ninth of September, 1992, in the offices of Maxus, there was a meeting between representatives of the Huaorani—Nanto Huamoni, Yacata Yategue, Salomón Oname [sic], and Tigue Oname—in which they expressed the following points which were decided in a meeting of the Huaorani Congress:
>
> 1. They decided that Maxus may begin to construct a road in the territory. The road shall be five to six metres wide.
> 2. They need Maxus's support in providing equipment for the primary and secondary school.
> 3. Colonization controls which will be worked by the Huaorani.
> 4. Generator for the night school.
> 5. Payment for a machinist to cut wood.
> 6. Transportation: Gasoline and two outboard motors.
> 7. Provision of medicine and health care programs.
> 8. They declare that they wish to make only one contract between the Maxus Company and ONAHE [sic].
>
> Today, September 9, we sign this act of the meeting, in agreement, with all the points mentioned.

The agreement was signed by all four Huaorani. Yacata and Tigue were from Garzacocha. When I met them, three months earlier, they had been adamantly opposed to the road, and they were, I was pretty certain, illiterate. On September 26th, Salomón Iquita told me that he hadn't been at the meeting. "Nanto came to me with this piece of paper," he said. "It was folded like this." He folded a copy of the agreement so that only his name was showing. "He told me I had to sign my name, so I did. When he went to sleep, I stole it out of his pants. What does it say?"

While it was true that there had been a Huao *congreso* (at an *asamblea* the Huaorani discuss issues among themselves; a *congreso* speaks formally to the world outside), and that oil issues had been discussed, the *congreso* had been held nine months earlier, and the resolution that had come out of it, and had been written down and signed by the ONHAE officers and the *dirigentes* of the various villages, hardly approved what was essentially the sale of the Huao birthright for what amounted to beads and trinkets. Rather, the resolution stated, among other things:

> We do not want the presence of the petroleum companies, because crude oil contaminates the rivers, the land and the environment, and destroys the health of the people. The Huaorani want no more advancement of oil development, because the roads are the first step in the invasion of colonists. We do not want the contamination, the noise, or the disruption of the oil companies. . . . We will apply our own law, the pain of death, and we are ready with arms to defend our territory against all invaders, because we are the bravest people in the Amazon.

When word of Nanto's agreement reached Moi, he and Enqueri travelled the territory for two weeks, by foot and canoe, to organize another *congreso*. They



visited each of the twenty-two Huao villages in the protectorate and sent word by canoe to the Yasuní Huaorani. Each clan sent a representative to the *congreso*, which was held in Nanto's village of Toñampare. The Maxus agreement was unanimously rejected.

A few weeks later, Nanto, his wife and daughter, and Moi and Enqueri came to visit me in Quito. About midnight on a Saturday, a woman I'd never met showed up with an envelope full of cash and demanded to speak with Nanto. She seemed surprised to see me, and she wouldn't tell me her name. The Huaorani were asleep; I said she would have to come back, and told her good night.

"What's tough is having to build a new power base from scratch."

Enqueri, who had been awakened by the conversation, sneaked a peek through the door as the woman waited for the elevator. "That's Rossana Faieta," he said. "This has been going on for many months now. The Company is trying to break Nanto. Rossana sits on his head. She will meet with him only when she thinks he is alone—when Moi and I are not there—because when he is alone he is very weak, especially if he comes to Quito. His head gets so full that he cannot think. After a while, he will agree to anything."

In the morning, I put the coffee on, and as we sat around the kitchen table eating papaya and sipping gringo *chicha* Enqueri told Nanto and Moi what had happened. Nanto was feeding pieces of bread to his infant daughter, Rocillo. She had been coughing harshly, from deep in her lungs, all night long. Nanto looked sad and tired. Unlike Enqueri and Moi, he had a family to support, and his work as the president of ONHAE kept him on the road constantly. He had little time for hunting and working at home. If he was indeed taking bribes, it wasn't hard to see why.

At first, though, I wondered why Nanto had given Rossana Faieta my address—surely he hadn't thought he could keep his dealings with her secret. But the more I thought about it the less surprised I was. There is no absence of guile among the Huaorani, but until the arrival of the Company, when survival without the clan became, if not possible, at least conceivable, guile that benefitted only the individual was impractical. It had been a society in which nothing could be hidden. The Huaorani haven't had much opportunity to hone skills that promote solitary action; if Nanto was corrupt, he just wasn't very good at it.

For his part, Nanto offered neither defense nor explanation of his behavior, and neither Moi nor Enqueri asked for any. Instead, Moi stood up behind Nanto and massaged his shoulders. "Nanto, Nanto," he said after a while. "We must be strong, Nanto. How can we fight the Company if we take money from it?" To my ears, at least, his voice carried no blame. The three of them are as close as brothers, and, in any case, the idea that Nanto could have deceived Moi and Enqueri in any real way was ridiculous. As far as they were concerned, Nanto was a victim. Moi nodded toward a spear they had brought me as a gift. "If she comes again," he said, "I will kill her." He might have been kidding, but I honestly couldn't tell.

ONE of the rights nominally guaranteed to Indians in Ecuador is to be shielded from contact with private petroleum interests. Manuel Navarro, who was the Petroecuador executive charged with overseeing the relationship between the Indians and the Company, told me that under Ecuadorian law foreign oil companies are prohibited from negotiating directly with the Indian groups, because such contact jeopardizes the Indians. (It is just this law, in fact, behind which such companies as Arco and Texaco hide when they're accused of ignoring the Indians on whose land they're drilling for oil.) I spoke with Navarro in his Quito office. That very day, he said, he had written a letter to Maxus, because he'd heard that Maxus had been dividing the Huaorani by creating "hateful differences" between various groups.

Then why did he permit Maxus to deal directly with the Huaorani?

Navarro smiled, then narrowed his eyes and squinted, as if delivering a lecture on the fundamentals of petroleum jurisprudence: Maxus doesn't like that law, so it doesn't apply to them. "They don't have much confidence in us," he explained.

Later, I called William Hutton, the general manager of Maxus in Ecuador, and told him about Rossana Faieta's payment to Nanto. "We have a policy of not paying the Huaorani money," he said. "But let me get back to you." He called in about an hour, and said, "Rossana said she wanted to reimburse Nanto for a trip he made to Quito to visit someone in a hospital. Sometimes we will cover their transportation expenses for emergencies."

I suggested that a Saturday midnight was an odd time to be doing business.

"Look, I won't say we've never paid any Huaorani any money, but to my knowledge we haven't," he said. "It's not a good thing to do with relatively uneducated people."

I asked him why, if he had agreed to

keep Faieta away from the Huaorani, she was still on the job.

"I didn't say I'd take her off the job," he said.

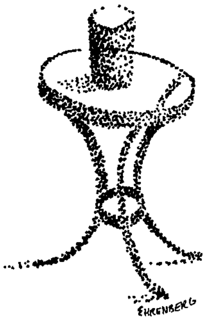
I read to him from a transcript of Moi's tape, in which it appeared that he agreed to do just that.

"That's taken out of context," he said.

I read him more of the transcript.

"Let me get back to you," he said. He didn't call again.

HUAO culture has no precedent for speaking in the united voice required for political power. Traditionally, the clans are autonomous, and, even within the clans, loyalty beyond one's immediate family is tenuous. To put the welfare of the nation above that of the family is a huge leap—and an area of vulnerability readily comprehended by the Company. Seiscom Delta, the company that performs most of the seismic testing, reportedly enters the Indian territories without informing the inhabitants, and without doing even the minimal paperwork required by the government. Last year, one of the Quichua federations staged a strike against Seiscom Delta, blocking all access roads; at about the same time, the Cofán kidnapped an entire seismic crew. Last October, Seiscom Delta started testing inside the Huao protectorate, within a mile of Toñampare, but two days later the Huaorani raided the camp and scared off the workers. The military escorted the workers back; the Huaorani raided the camp again. Petroecuador officials flew in to try to smooth things over. They spoke with Nanto. "What do you want?" one of the Petroecuador men asked, and his co-workers reached into the Company helicopter and hauled out bags of pots and pans and rice and candies. Torn between the political position of ONHAE (absolutely opposed to the Company) and the old loyalties of clan and family (what do you have to eat?), Nanto opted for the latter, accepting the gifts and distributing them in Toñampare.



Nanto's decision meant that the Company would be back, with more things; and they would look for their oil; and, if they found it, one day the rivers in Rachel Saint's protectorate—where eighty per cent of the Huaorani live, where the resources they depend on are already stretched precariously thin, and where the Huaorani have no choice but to stay, since there is nowhere for them to go—one day, surely, those rivers will run black with Amazon crude.

MAXUS began the construction of its road last November. In protest, Moi and Enqueri led two hundred Huao men, women, and children on a long trek, by foot, canoe, truck, and bus, from the deep Amazon to the high Andes—to Quito, where they laid siege to the Maxus offices. They made their camp in a park across the street from the Maxus high-rise. They demanded to speak with William Hutton; Hutton dispatched Rossana Faieta. When she reached the street, the Huaorani women assaulted her. The Huaorani held the camp for two weeks, until cold, sickness, and hunger drove them back to the forest.

Nanto participated in the protest, but by then his spirit was broken; in February, when ONHAE held new elections, he did not run. Nor did Moi, choosing instead to concentrate his energies on the defense—"with spears from all sides"—of remote Quehueriono, which so far remains beyond the reach of the Company. With Amo dead, the ONHAE mantle has come to rest on the thin shoulders of Condorito, Enqueri—with whom, last month, Maxus announced that it had signed an agreement.

Maxus has refused to release a copy of the agreement; when I called Hutton in Ecuador, he said that it would be "inappropriate." It was an "involved" document, he said, and needed explanation. I asked him whether Enqueri had had the benefit of an independent adviser to help him analyze the contract. Indeed, he had, Hutton said—"the government." He dismissed my suggestion that the government was compromised. "There's no compromise at all. It's a very one-sided agreement. The Huaorani are receiving educational and other benefits from Maxus, and the only obligation they have is to let us come into their land." Maxus, he said, is legally entitled to exploit the Huao land with or without Huao coöperation, but would like to be a good neighbor.

On September 7th, eleven days after the agreement was signed, Maxus spilled thirty-eight thousand gallons of raw crude in the Oriente. What was perhaps most remarkable about this spill—only the latest in a string of accidents, violations, and confrontations that have occurred since Maxus began building its road—is that it happened before Maxus had opened its first well. Somehow, in the course of building its own pipeline, Maxus managed to rupture a line operated by Occidental Petroleum.

Of this I am sure: what the Company believes Enqueri has agreed to and what Enqueri believes he has agreed to are two entirely different things. This belief was reinforced just a few weeks ago, when, through the mysterious and difficult channels such communications take, I (and others) received a public letter from Moi. It had been written two weeks after the Maxus contract was signed. Maxus, he said, had bribed Enqueri "with an outboard motor, lots of gas, a new set of teeth, and glory." The contract had been kept secret until a few days before the signing, and even after the signing most Huaorani still did not know its contents, or what it meant for them. The tribal elders were "vehemently opposed" to the contract, and bitterly angry that it had been signed without benefit of legal counsel. "Several Maxus personnel have threatened to control the Huaorani with use of violence," Moi wrote. "The last thing Maxus told me was that if we bother them there will always be a military presence in Huaorani territory."

The Ecuadorian government has announced that it is accelerating oil development in the Oriente; it is opening new concessions throughout the Oriente, some in lands that the Huaorani have long considered theirs. (Petroecuador, in developing a field that will take advantage of the Maxus infrastructure, has reportedly dumped seven thousand gallons of raw crude in the Yasuní River.) By most estimates, the Oriente will be pumped dry in ten or fifteen years.

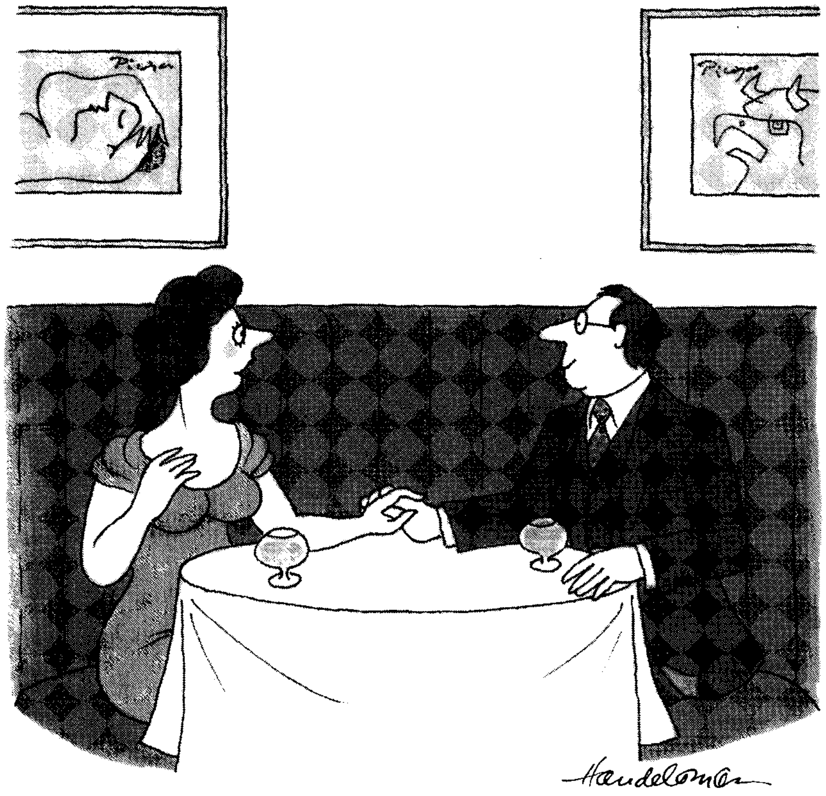
Robert Kennedy continues to argue that sticking with Conoco was the least bad of a number of bad alternatives. In August of last year, in the Washington *Post,* Kennedy chastised environmental groups that saw driving Conoco out of the Oriente as a victory. Oil development is inevitable, Kennedy argued, and is less damaging to the rain forest than mining, lumbering, or cattle ranching; Conoco could have been influenced by environmentalists, because it is vulnerable to public pressure, whereas a small, independent company like Maxus is not. Kennedy shrugs off the charge that his Río Napo Foundation was a sellout of the Huaorani, and that it was stopped, in the end, not so much by American environmentalists as by the Huaorani themselves. He's still mystified by the situation he faced. "I have no idea what happened, or what the internal"—that is, Indian—"politics were," he told me. "There's almost an anthropological question of whether they have the capacity to negotiate." The Oriente's Indians, he said, "are essentially inept at government."

It would be easy to dismiss Kennedy's arguments as disingenuous (he must know, for example, that oil development leads directly to mining, farming, and ranching, and that, even if environmentalists had been able to influence Conoco, there would have been no control over other oil companies, like Petroecuador, that would piggyback on the Conoco infrastructure), or as sour grapes, or as inexperience (after all, he spent only a short time in the Oriente). But that would miss the point. The point is that many of the people involved with environmental and human-rights work in the Oriente have succumbed to the same seductive logic as Kennedy and Jacob Scherr, because sitting in a corporate office negotiating a multimillion-dollar deal is far headier, and far more comfortable, than sleeping in the mud. Almost none of the groups that have taken up the cause of the Huaorani, or their land, have a relationship with the Huaorani that is anything more than tangential, and, frankly, it's hard to fault them. Working with the Huaorani is a high-risk, low-reward proposition: travel to the territory is expensive, dangerous, and time-consuming (and, often, illegal); communication is nearly impossible; the cultural gulf is enormous; the Company is all-powerful; and the Huaorani themselves are utterly unpredictable.

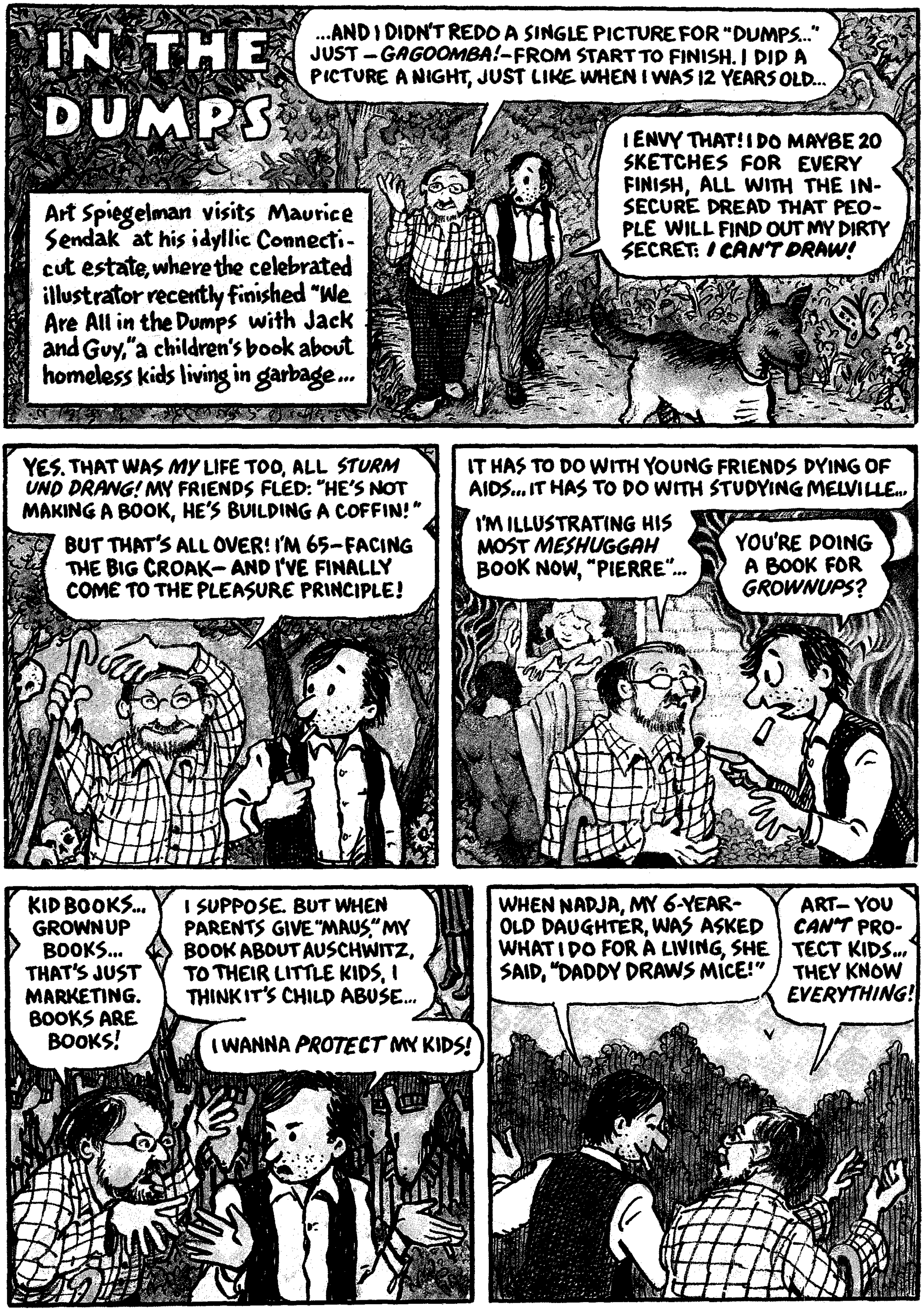
Still, there are signs that the struggle isn't over. Judith Kimerling has filed a suit against Texaco. The fragile alliance between Ecuador's urban environmentalists and Amazonian Indians, which Kennedy and Scherr helped blow apart, has coalesced again around Kimerling's work, and around the rapidly escalating scale of oil disasters. (Last year, a spill filled the Napo with a slick that stretched from bank to bank for forty miles. "It looks much worse than it is," a Petroecuador official said. "The water underneath is perfectly fine.") A movement has begun here to persuade Congress to open hearings on the activities of American oil companies in the Oriente. The feeling seems to be that the only way to get the Company ever to clean up its act is to give it reason to fear that somewhere down the road it will have to pay for the damage it has done.

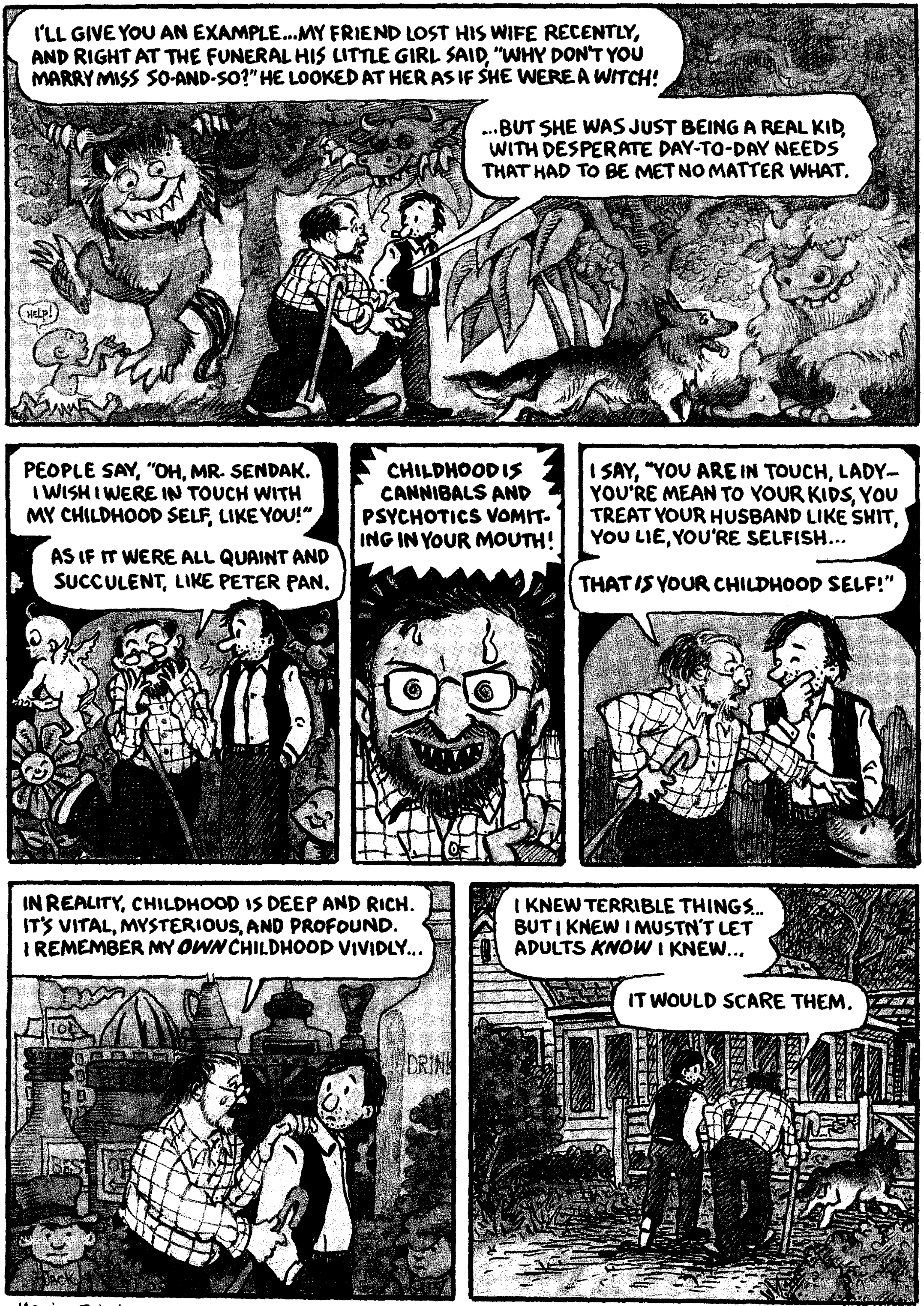
Meanwhile, the Company presses on. In my mind, and in the minds of many others, there is no question that the behavior of American oil companies in the Amazon would invite prosecution if they acted that way at home. But if blame is to be assigned, one must also point, strongly, to the Ecuadorian government; and, unfortunately, to environmentalists; and to the Oriente's indigenous leaders themselves. And one must consider this: Like almost all the oil in the Oriente, the oil beneath the Huaorani homeland is destined for the United States. Americans—you and I—must look to themselves and ask: Are we willing to have innocent people destroyed to save a few cents on a gallon of gas? Change is inevitable for the Huaorani, but it is in our power to allow them the time—and space—to develop their own cultural tools for dealing with that change. If, for the sake of thirteen days of oil, the Huaorani disappear, then are we not their killers?

On Columbus Day of last year, twenty thousand Indians, from all corners of Ecuador, descended on Quito to stage a mass protest. About half of them made it through a cordon of military barriers erected around the city. In a driving rain, they gathered in the central plaza to hear Valerio Grefa rail against five hundred years of oppression by the Spanish conquerors. He punctuated his speech with thrusts of a Huao spear. It was a tourist spear, from a trinket shop, and it was maybe half the size of a real spear. But the Huaorani didn't mind. They didn't even know. They hadn't come to Quito, and they hadn't joined the protest. As they see it, they have never been conquered, because they are the bravest people in the Amazon. ♦



"Thank you so much for inviting me to play a pivotal role in your marriage. What am I to do, exactly?"


IN THE DUMPS
...AND I DIDN'T REDO A SINGLE PICTURE FOR "DUMPS..." JUST – GAGOOMBA! – FROM START TO FINISH. I DID A PICTURE A NIGHT, JUST LIKE WHEN I WAS 12 YEARS OLD...
I ENVY THAT! I DO MAYBE 20 SKETCHES FOR EVERY FINISH, ALL WITH THE INSECURE DREAD THAT PEOPLE WILL FIND OUT MY DIRTY SECRET: I CAN'T DRAW!
Art Spiegelman visits Maurice Sendak at his idyllic Connecticut estate, where the celebrated illustrator recently finished "We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy," a children's book about homeless kids living in garbage...
YES. THAT WAS MY LIFE TOO, ALL STURM UND DRANG! MY FRIENDS FLED: "HE'S NOT MAKING A BOOK, HE'S BUILDING A COFFIN!"
BUT THAT'S ALL OVER! I'M 65 – FACING THE BIG CROAK – AND I'VE FINALLY COME TO THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE!
IT HAS TO DO WITH YOUNG FRIENDS DYING OF AIDS... IT HAS TO DO WITH STUDYING MELVILLE...
I'M ILLUSTRATING HIS MOST MESHUGGAH BOOK NOW, "PIERRE"...
YOU'RE DOING A BOOK FOR GROWNUPS?
KID BOOKS... GROWNUP BOOKS... THAT'S JUST MARKETING. BOOKS ARE BOOKS!
I SUPPOSE. BUT WHEN PARENTS GIVE "MAUS," MY BOOK ABOUT AUSCHWITZ, TO THEIR LITTLE KIDS, I THINK IT'S CHILD ABUSE...
I WANNA PROTECT MY KIDS!
WHEN NADJA, MY 6-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, WAS ASKED WHAT I DO FOR A LIVING, SHE SAID, "DADDY DRAWS MICE!"
ART – YOU CAN'T PROTECT KIDS... THEY KNOW EVERYTHING!


I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE...MY FRIEND LOST HIS WIFE RECENTLY, AND RIGHT AT THE FUNERAL HIS LITTLE GIRL SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU MARRY MISS SO-AND-SO?" HE LOOKED AT HER AS IF SHE WERE A WITCH!
...BUT SHE WAS JUST BEING A REAL KID, WITH DESPERATE DAY-TO-DAY NEEDS THAT HAD TO BE MET NO MATTER WHAT.
HELP!
PEOPLE SAY, "OH, MR. SENDAK. I WISH I WERE IN TOUCH WITH MY CHILDHOOD SELF, LIKE YOU!"
AS IF IT WERE ALL QUAINT AND SUCCULENT, LIKE PETER PAN.
CHILDHOOD IS CANNIBALS AND PSYCHOTICS VOMITING IN YOUR MOUTH!
I SAY, "YOU ARE IN TOUCH, LADY— YOU'RE MEAN TO YOUR KIDS, YOU TREAT YOUR HUSBAND LIKE SHIT, YOU LIE, YOU'RE SELFISH...
THAT *IS* YOUR CHILDHOOD SELF!"
IN REALITY, CHILDHOOD IS DEEP AND RICH. IT'S VITAL, MYSTERIOUS, AND PROFOUND. I REMEMBER MY *OWN* CHILDHOOD VIVIDLY...
DRINK
BEST
JACK
I KNEW TERRIBLE THINGS... BUT I KNEW I MUSTN'T LET ADULTS *KNOW* I KNEW...
IT WOULD SCARE THEM.

Maurice Sendak

art spiegelman

FICTION

SOMEONE TO TALK TO

BY DEBORAH EISENBERG

"ARE you going to be all right, Aaron?" Caroline said.

Shapiro saw himself, as if in a dream, standing on a dark shore. "Yes," he heard himself say.

"Are you sure?" Caroline said.

Lady Chatterley leaned herself thuggishly against Shapiro's shin and began to purr. "Hello, there," he said. He reached down and patted her gingerly.

Caroline hesitated at the door, then took a few steps back toward Shapiro, and her delicious, clean fragrance spilled over him. "Your big concert's in less than a month now. . . ." She tilted her head and managed a little smile.

Was she going to touch him? Shapiro went rigid with alarm, but she just looked vaguely around the room. "You know, it's supposed to be a beautiful country. . . ." She scooped up Lady Chatterley and nuzzled the orange fur. "Chat. Dear little Chat. Are you going to take care of Aaron?" She took a paw in her hand. "Are you?"

Lady Chatterley wrenched herself free and bounded back to the floor. Caroline's eyes—like Lady Chatterley's—were large and light and spoked with black. Her small face was pale, always, as though with shock.

"Shall I help you with your things?" Shapiro said.

There was really only one suitcase, a good one—leather, old, genteel—which had probably accompanied Caroline to college; the rest had gone on before. "No need," she said. Tears wavered momentarily in her eyes. "Jim's picking me up."

The suitcase appeared to be heavy. Shapiro watched Caroline's thin legs as she struggled slightly with it. At the door she turned back. "Aaron?" she said.

He waited to hear himself answer, but this time no words came.

"Aaron, I know this is probably not what you want to hear right now, but I think it's important for me to say it—I'll always care about you, you know. I hope you know that."

SHAPIRO awoke suddenly and unpleasantly, as though a crateful of fruit had been dropped on him. There was an unfamiliar wall next to him, and the window was all wrong. He heard footsteps, a snicker. A hotel room wobbled into place around him—yes, Richard Penwad would be coming to pick him up, and Caroline wasn't even in this country.

The night had been crowded with Caroline and endless versions of her departure—dreamed, reversed in dreams, modified, amended, transfigured, made tender and transcendently beautiful as though it had been an act of sacral purification. For a week or so he had been free of her, or at least anesthetized. But this morning he was battered by her absence; in this distant place his body and mind didn't know how to protect themselves.

As soon as she'd left that day, he'd closed his eyes. An afterimage of the door glowed. When he'd opened his eyes again, the room seemed strange in an undetectable way, as though he were seeing it after a hiatus of years. Hesitantly, he brushed cat fur from the armchair and sat down.

Six years. Six years of life that belonged to them both, out the door in the form of Caroline's fragile person. If only there'd been less . . . tension about money. Caroline, from many generations of a background she referred to as "comfortable," was deeply sympathetic with, and at the same time deeply insensitive to, the distress of others. "Why not, Aaron?" she would say. "Why don't I just take care of the rent from now on?" Or, when she felt like going to some morbidly expensive restaurant, "I could treat. Wouldn't it be fun, for a change? Of course"—she would gaze at him with concern—"if you're not going to enjoy it . . ." Sometimes, when she noticed him grimly going through the mail or eying the telephone, she would say gently, "Something will turn up."

Though not quite a prodigy, Shapiro had been received with great enthusiasm at the youthful start of his career. He'd been shy and luminously pale, with dark curls and almost freakish technical abilities that delighted audiences. But the qualities he greatly admired and envied in other pianists—varieties of a profound musicianship which focussed the attention on the ear, hearing, rather than on the hand, executing—were ones he lacked. He practiced, he struggled, he cultivated patience, and he was rewarded—minimally. By just the faintest flicker of heat in his crystalline touch.

His curls, pallor, and technique lost some of their brilliance; his audience was distracted by newcomers and dispersed, and a sudden increase in the velocity of the earth's spin dumped Shapiro into his thirty-eighth year. *Aaron Shapiro.* Caroline had been starry-eyed when they'd met, although by that time he'd already moved out to the margin of the city and was beginning to take on private students, startlingly untalented children who at best thought of the piano as a defective substitute for something electronic. Gradually he ceased to be the sort of pianist who might expect to make recordings, give important concerts, be interviewed, hold posts at conservatories. His name, once received like a slab of precious metal, was now received like a slip of blank paper.

"Things will work out," Caroline said, although "things," in Shapiro's estimation, were deteriorating. She touched him less often. Her smiles became increasingly lambent and forbearing. Sometimes she called in the afternoon to say she'd be held up at work. Her voice would be hesitant, apprehensive; her words floated in the air like dying petals while he listened, reluctant to hang up but unable to think of anything to say.

Recently, he'd been silent for whole evenings, reading, or simply sitting. Rent, plus utilities, plus insurance, minus lessons, plus food—columns of figures went marching through his head, knocking everything else out of it. Once, after he'd had a day of particularly demoralizing students, Caroline perched on the arm of his chair. "Things will work out," she said, and touched his cheek.

She might just as well have socked him. "Things will work out?" he said. He was ready to weep with desire that this be true, yet it was manifestly not. "You mean— Ah. Perhaps what you mean is that things will work out for some other species. Or on some other planet. In which case, Caroline, you and I are in complete accord. After all, life moves on."

She was staring at him, her hand drawn back as though she'd inadvertently touched a hot stove. Was that his voice? Were those his words? He could hardly believe it himself. Those stiff words, like stiff little soldiers, stiff with shame at the atrocities they were committing.

"Life moves on," he continued, ruthless and miserable, "but not necessarily to the benefit of the individual, does it? Yes, things will work out eventually, I suppose. But do you think they'll work out for the guy who sleeps in front of our building? Do you think—" The danger and excitement of probing his terror narrowed his vision into a throbbing circle, from which Caroline, imprisoned, stared back. "Do you think they'll work out for me?"

She'd retreated to the other room, and he sat with his head in his hands. Evidently, Caroline herself did not understand or accept the very thing she had just forced him to understand and accept—that he, like most humans, was an experiment that had never been expected to succeed, a little padding around some evolutionary thrust, a scattershot nubbin of DNA. It was a matter of huge biological importance, for some reason, that he be desperate to meet the demands of his life, but it was a matter of no biological importance whatever that he be *able* to meet them.

But that week—that very week—an airmail letter arrived from a Richard Penwad inviting Shapiro to play Umberto García-Gutiérrez's Second Piano Concerto at a Pan-American music festival.

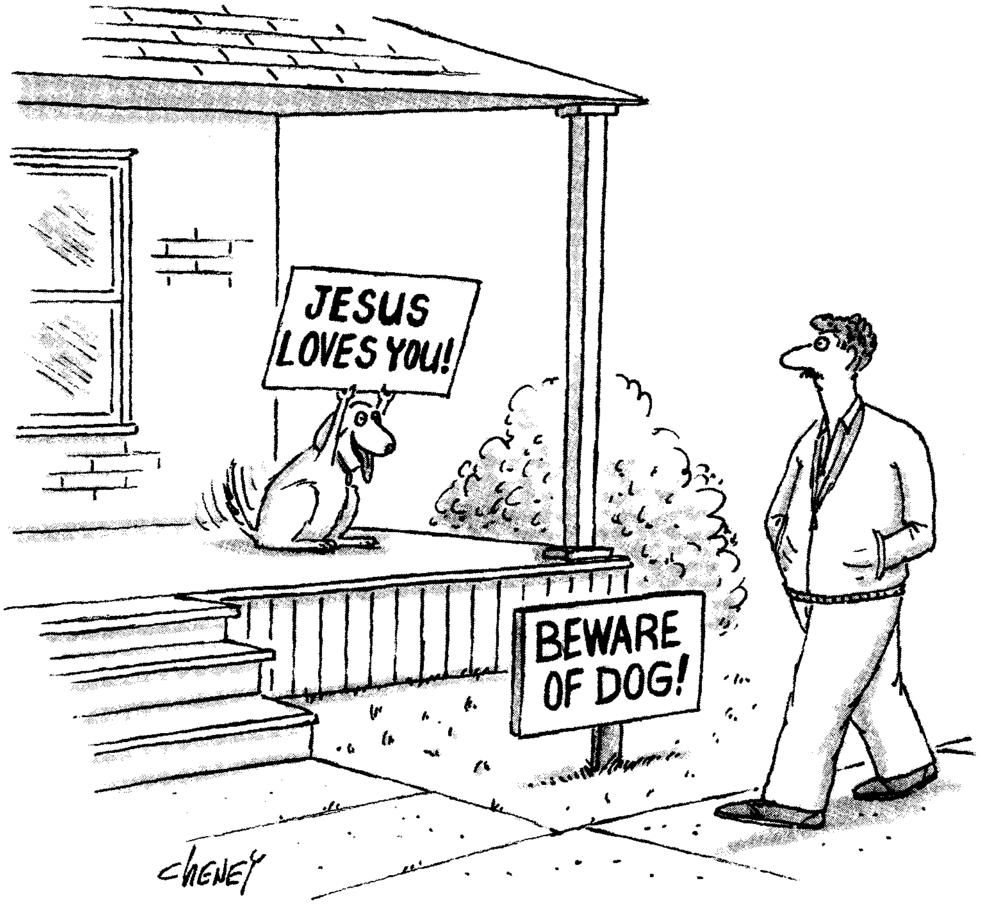
An amazing occurrence. Though one that, having occurred, was—like every other occurrence—plausible. The terrible feeling hanging over the apartment began to evaporate. Shapiro was embarrassed by his recent behavior and feelings, which now seemed absurdly theatrical, absurdly childish. Of course things would work out. Why wouldn't things work out? Why shouldn't he and Caroline go to whatever restaurant she pleased? And enjoy it. Order some decent wine, attend concerts, travel . . . Check in hand, he would lead Caroline into the bower of celebrity and international conviviality from which he'd been exiled. However gradually, in due course things would work out.

In the days that followed, Shapiro felt by turns precariously elated and violently dejected, as though he were emerging from the chaos of an accident that had left him impaired in as yet undisclosed ways. He would catch Caroline gazing at him soberly with her great, light-filled eyes. She mentioned the invitation frequently. "Isn't it terrific?" she said. "Aaron. How terrific." Her voice was tender and lingering—remote, the voice in which, when they'd first met, she'd recounted to Shapiro tales of her idyllic childhood. Then, one evening, when he came home with a guidebook, she said, "Listen, Aaron." And her voice had been especially gentle. "We have to talk."

SHAPIRO checked the clock by his uncomfortable bed; it would be a relief to go downstairs and meet Penwad. His brain felt unbalanced by Caroline's precipitous entrances and exits; anything to block them. He shut the door of his dark, cramped room behind him, and descended to the restaurant; yes, unbalanced! The corridors themselves seemed to buckle underfoot.

The festival would have been an attractive proposition even at the best of times. Shapiro had played once before in Latin America—a concert in Mexico City many years earlier. The air in the hall had been velvety with receptivity, the audience ideal, and although his piece had been first on the program, they had demanded an encore from him right then and there.

The García-Gutiérrez concerto had furnished other happy occasions in his career. He'd performed its United States première some seventeen years earlier. The piano part was splashy and difficult, perhaps not terribly substantial, but an excellent vehicle for Shapiro; it glittered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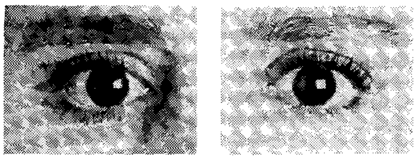

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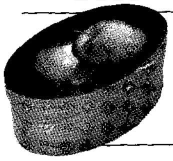

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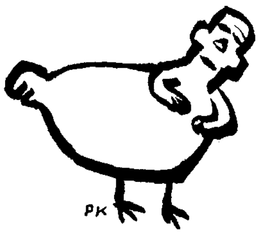
in his hands. García-Gutiérrez had been there to congratulate him with a quiet intensity. What would he look like now, Shapiro wondered. At that time he'd been handsome—silvery hair, tall, hooded eyes. How young Shapiro must have seemed, with his abashed, eager gratitude!

Penwad was already downstairs at the restaurant drinking a coffee. He extended, with official enthusiasm, a carefully manicured but stubby hand, and grimaced as Shapiro shook it. "We're pleased we could get you down," he said, and glanced at his palm. "This is our first go at the festival, I think I must have written you, but we're hoping to bring people such as yourself annually, from all over the Americas—especially the States. We're starting out with García-Gutiérrez as our star attraction, you see, because he's a local boy."

On the walls were posters of palm-fringed lakes, frosted volcanoes, and Indians smiling regal, slightly haughty smiles. Interspersed with the posters were magnificent examples of Indian textiles.

"Charming, isn't it?" Penwad said. "Not a—an *ostentatious* place, but we felt you'd find it charming."

Charming, Shapiro thought. Well, probably the other hotels were even worse. He glanced at the walls again. Charming! It was well known, what was happening in this country to the descendants of its earliest inhabitants—massacres, internment, debt slavery, torture—and, *naturally*, the waiters who scurried around beneath the smiling posters, looking raddled and grief-stricken, were Indians, ceremonial costumes draping their skinny bodies.



"People don't tend to be aware how vigorous our sponsorship of the arts is," Penwad was saying. "We're hoping the festival will help to . . . rectify the, ah, perception that we're identified with the military here."

Shapiro's attention was wrenched from the waiters. "The perception that . . ."

"Rectify that perception," Penwad said.

Fee, Shapiro reminded himself. Fee plus lessons, minus rent, minus utilities . . . Well, and besides, there would be the credit. In a program note, even the most dubious event acquired grandeur. And why not? Concerts and exhibitions from the beginning of time had been funded by villains in search of endorsement, apologists, a place in history, or simple self-esteem. "Incidentally," Shapiro said, "who is 'we'?"

Penwad raised his eyebrows. "Who is we?" he said.

"That is, when you say 'we'—" "Ah," Penwad said. "Well, I'm not including myself, actually. I'm just a liaison, really, between the Embassy and various local committees and groups concerned with the arts."

"I see," Shapiro said, with no attempt at tact.

"So," Penwad said. "We'll get you a bit of breakfast, then go on over to the Arts Center, take a little look around—Rehearsal all day, rather strenuous, I'm afraid. After that we've fixed up a little interview for you—I trust that's all right—around dinnertime. Friday's free until the concert. Joan and I will pick you up first thing in the morning to show you around." He smiled. "Joan has her own ideas, but you must say what interests *you*. Then, after the concert, there's to be a party, a reception for you, essentially, at the home of some friends of ours, very fine people here. Then plane, yes? Very next morning." He already, Shapiro noticed, looked relieved. "Quite a whirlwind."

"Wonderful," Shapiro said. "But no need, you know, to take me over to the . . . Arts Center. Why don't I just grab a taxi?"

Penwad waved his hand. "I'm afraid the Center is difficult to find. Most of the drivers are unfamiliar with it. Besides," he added, "enjoy your company." He narrowed his eyes at his coffee cup, and raised it to his mouth.

THERE was something anatomical about the Center's great concrete sweeps and protuberances. Like all Arts Centers and Performing Arts Complexes and National Centers for the Performing Arts, though futuristic in design, it had a look of ancient decay, being left over from a period when leisure time and economic abundance were considered an imminent menace. How quaint a notion that now seemed! Shapiro almost laughed to think there had been a period, the period in which he'd grown up, no less, when it had been feared that wealth would soon cause humanity to devolve into a grunting mass sprawled in front of blood-drenched TV screens. But, no—*Art* (whatever that was), encouraged to flourish in its Centers, would prevent people from becoming intractable, illiterate, fat! And all the while poverty was accomplishing the devolution by itself.

"I see you're enjoying the, ah, prospect," Penwad said.

Shapiro became aware that he was staring down over toothy crenellations into a city cleaved by deep ravines and encircled by mountains.

"Those tall buildings are the downtown area, of course," Penwad said. "And to the right and left, obviously, are residential sectors. Our place is over there—that's pretty much where the whole English-speaking community has . . . put down its little roots. And up there on the slopes is what we call the Gold Zone."

Shapiro, shading his eyes, noticed that the ravines below were encrusted with fuming slums. "My God," he said.

"Incredible, isn't it," Penwad said, "what an earthquake can do? You can really see the damage from up here. You probably noticed the floor of your hotel. The Center survived intact, though. We're very proud of the Center. The architect was truly successful, we feel, the way he . . . Yes, actually. You might be interested. A fellow named Santiago Méndez. He's done most of the better hotels in town, and our museum. There was a lecture last year. One of our events. It was explained. The way Méndez—Well, this was some time ago, of course—Joan would be better able to . . . But . . . the . . . combined influences." He gestured toward several concrete mounds. "The modernistic, the indigenous . . . well, *motifs*. A cross-fertilization, as Joan says."

Shapiro hesitated. A buntinglike stupefaction had enveloped him. "Of . . . what?" he asked.

"Of . . . ? What of what?" Penwad asked.

"Of . . . " Shapiro had lost the thread of his own question. "Of what . . . does *Joan* . . . say 'cross-fertilization'?"

"Joan *says* it . . . " Penwad glared at him. "She says it of . . . mo*tifs*."

THE orchestra was from a small, nearby dictatorship, and the musicians had a startled appearance, as though a huge claw had snatched them from their beds and plonked them into their chairs. The conductor, a delicate and intelligent-looking man, welcomed Shapiro with reassuring collegiality, but when he brought down his baton Shapiro almost cried out; the sound was so peculiar that he feared he was suffering from some neurological damage.

How had the conductor come to find himself in his profession, Shapiro wondered. The man's waving arms seemed to be signalling for help rather than leading an orchestra. The poor musicians clutched their instruments, staring wildly at their sheet music as they played. But then it was Shapiro's entrance; notes began to leap froggily from his own fingers, and he understood: clearly the hall was demonic.

How to outwit these acoustics? As if this concerto were not difficult enough under the best of circumstances, with all its flash and bombast! But, of course, there was always something. Even in the loftiest, the most competently administered concert, catastrophes invented themselves from the far reaches of possibility. The piano bench would fall into splinters at seven-forty-five, or the other musicians turned out to have a new version of the score, three measures shorter than one's own, or there was a bank holiday and it was impossible to retrieve one's tuxedo from the cleaner's—catastrophes far beneath the considerations of music, and yet!

How synthetic the concerto sounded in this inhospitable hall! Shapiro was surprised to find himself disliking it so. He had never tremendously admired it, exactly, but he'd always enjoyed playing it: he'd enjoyed the athletic challenge of its surface complexities; he'd enjoyed the response of the audience. It was *affirming*, people said upon hearing it, and their faces had the shining, decisive expressions of people who feel their worth to be recognized. *Affirming*, Shapiro thought, as sound sloshed and bulged, gummed up in clumps, liquefied, as

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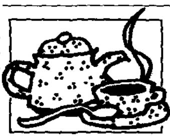

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though the air were full of whirling blades.

THE interview that had been arranged for Shapiro was with an English journalist named Beale. An interview: implied interest on the part of someone. There would be clippings, at least, and, perhaps, therefore some shadowy retention of his name in the minds of those people—"we"—who put these festivals together.

Shapiro located Beale in a restaurant of the hotel, much larger than his own, where they'd been scheduled to meet. "Are you tired of it?" Beale inquired anxiously. "I was hoping not. In my opinion it's the best food in town, and the station will reimburse if it's an interview."

Beale's head was an interesting spaceship shape. Colorless and sensitive-looking filaments sprouted from it, and his ears looked like receiving devices. Sensors, transmitters, Shapiro thought, noting Beale's other large, responsive-looking features and his nervous, hesitant fingers. Beale's suit was faintly mottled by traces of stains; his shirt, from the evidence of his wrists, was short-sleeved, and he wore, incredibly, a tie that appeared to be made of rope.

"I'm not tired of it yet," Shapiro said. "I've never been here."

Beale squinted distrustfully at Shapiro. "They didn't put you here? They put a lot of guests here. . . ."

Shapiro glanced around. So this was where they'd put an *important* musician. It was ugly and grandiose, with slippery-looking walls—the very air seemed soaked with a venal, melting luxe. "Santiago Méndez?" he said.

"Oh, you're good," Beale said with delight. "Seriously. If they bring you down again, insist. Nice, isn't it? They all speak English, and the furniture doesn't just"—he lunged toward Shapiro in illustration—"loom up at you. Now, will you drink something?"

Shapiro saw that two glasses already sat in front of Beale, one emptied and the other containing hardly more than a gold film. "Just water, thanks," Shapiro said.

"Oh, you can, here," Beale said. "Rest assured. Ice and all. I, on the other hand," he informed a waiter, "will have a whiskey, why not."

"And perhaps we could order," Shapiro added. Well, at least someone had seen fit to arrange a party for him.

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The moon had wandered deep within her caves
Deep in thought,
Wandered away from the light
Longer than she ever had before then.

It was night forever
Until she shone again.
She was the eye within her own belly
For the duration of her motherhood,

And was in God knows
What tempers inside.
She was full of wrath and
Full of pity,

shining through
the
smoke of the
cherry trees.

—JEFFREY GUSTAVSON

Beale studied the menu worriedly, running his finger along the print. He had quantities of advice for Shapiro about it but seemed unable to make up his own mind. "A nice chop, perhaps," Beale said. "You know, this is the one place where it's perfectly safe to eat pork. That is if you—" His eyes blinked and reset themselves furiously, like lights on an overtaxed instrument panel.

While Beale entrusted his order to the waiter, Shapiro's attention wandered to posters on the wall. Plenty of charm here, too: more lakes, more volcanoes, more smiling Indians. . . . Beale dove abruptly beneath the table, resurfacing with a tape recorder as primitive-looking as a trilobite. "I hope you don't mind if I . . . There are several publications that are reasonably, well . . . friendly to me, but mostly I do radio."

"Radio," Shapiro agreed politely. "And this would be for . . . the English-speaking community, I presume."

Beale looked at him blankly. "Not really. There are telephones for that sort of thing. Oh! No." His voice became gluey with attempted modesty. "No, this is a show back home in England, you see. They often ask me for a little story."

England. So, this was a bit more promising. "A show . . . about the arts," Shapiro suggested.

"The arts?" Beale said. "Well, there's not really too much scope for that sort of thing here. This country isn't just churning out the artists, you know. Not a very . . . well, 'favorable climate' I suppose is the expression. Actually, it's a show about just whatever happens to come up. I was glad when your Embassy called and put me on to this one, because there's not really a fantastic amount. You can file only just so often about dead students before people get sick of it. Still, don't think I'm complaining—I'm lucky to be here at all. When I was young, I was simply frantic to get to this part of the world. Astonishing place. Have you had much chance to get around? See the sights, meet the people?"

"I got in last night," Shapiro said.

"Ah," Beale said. "Oh, yes. Well, it is truly staggering. Very beautiful, as I'm sure you know. And the highlands—when I first came it was like the dawn of the earth up there, really. Oh, if I could only . . ." He sighed. "You know, the Indians here had simply everything at one time. A calendar. A written language—centuries, centuries, *centuries* before the Spanish came. And all sorts of other magnificent, um—appurtenances. While *we* were still running around in—" He cast a veiled glance at Shapiro. "Yes. Well, and the Spanish actually destroyed it all. But you know that. Burned their books, herded them into villages with Spanish overseers. Isn't it amazing? The written language was actually de*stroyed*, do you see. The calendar, the architecture, the books . . . And so, I mean, we're slaughtering these people and so forth, but we don't really know anything about them. And if they know anything about themselves they're not letting on. Who *are* they? That is, who are *we*? I mean, *they're* here, *we're* here. . . . It's just terribly *strange*." He smiled a misty, wondering smile, then frowned. "Oh dear. *Any*how, I tried and tried to get people to send me here. They said, 'But *why*? Where *is* it? Nothing *happens* there.' Then, fortunately, there were all these insurrections and wars and whatnot, and that created demand, and so now I've been here over fifteen years!"

Shapiro opened his mouth; a blob of sound came out.

"I tried to reach García-Gutiérrez yesterday," Beale said. "But I gathered he hadn't arrived yet. He lives in Europe a lot of the time now, you know. They told me he'd be in today, but I thought I'd talk to you instead. I'm sure he's a wonderful composer. They say he is. But, to tell you the truth, the man gives me the shivers. I've seen him around, at parties here, and I just don't like his sort. You know what I mean—well-fed, a bit of a dandy. *Suave*. Eye always on the main chance. A big smile for every colonel. Ladies all love him. Government always showing him off like a big, stuffed . . ." Beale brooded at his drink, then waved over a new one. "Anyhow," he said unhappily, "I've got you."

Shapiro took a sip of water. He would have liked a drink, too, but alcohol affected him unpredictably. Even Beale's alcohol seemed to be making Shapiro mentally peculiar. "Let me ask you," he said. "It isn't actually dangerous here, I suppose."

"Dangerous?" Beale said. "Why? What do you mean? Not for *you*, it isn't. You know"—he sat back and looked at Shapiro with drunken coldness—"I find it *most* comical. How Americans come down here, and they talk about danger. And they talk about *this*, and they talk about *that*. Well, I don't endorse slavery and torture myself, but who are you, may I ask, to talk? Dare I mention who kicked off all this ha-ha 'counterinsurgency' business here in the first place? Dare I mention whose country it was that *killed* all *their* Indians?"

"Now, look—" Shapiro began.

"A thousand apologies," Beale said. "How true. You're no more responsible for your country than I am for mine. But all this simply jerks my chain, I'm afraid. It simply does. And I mean *dangerous!* I mean this place is hardly in the league of— I mean, one's forever reading, isn't one? How some poor tourist? Who's saved his pennies for years and years and years. Who then *goes* to New York, to see a show on your great Broad*way*, and virtually the instant he arrives gets stabbed in the . . . " He took a violent gulp of his drink. "The—"

"Liver," Shapiro said.

"*Sub*way," Beale said. "Yes." He beamed at Shapiro in surprise. "I don't know why that's so difficult to . . . Oh, look," he exclaimed, as the waiter set down their plates. "Oh, my darling! That *is* nice." He extracted a pair of glasses from his pocket, put them on to peer at his plate, then removed them to clean them on his ropy tie.

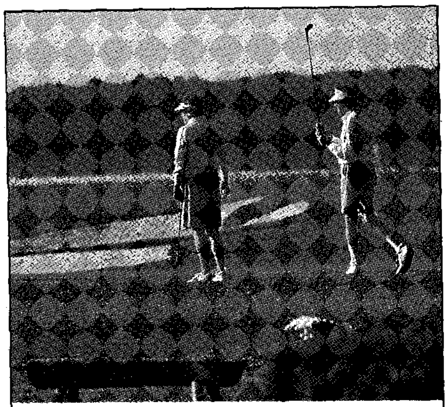
Shapiro took a bite of his meal, but Beale's grubbiness had damaged his appetite.

"Of course the highlands are another story," Beale said. "The highlands, the whole countryside, really—still sheer carnage. But here in the city it's just sporadic violence. Of a whatsit sort. Really, about the worst that can happen to you here is Protestants. Random. Of a random sort."

"Protestants?" Shapiro said.

"Evangelicals," Beale said. "So bloody noisy. Haranguing in the streets, massive convocations every which place, speaking in tongues—YAGABAGABAGAGABAGAGA." He sighed. "Now, don't think I'm prejudiced, please. I'm Protestant myself. But that's the point, isn't it? That one can slag off one's own group, though one would never— That is, I, for instance, would never, oh, say, call . . . a Jew, for example, a '*kike*'—that's *your* prerogative. But all that shouting is simply not the point of speech. I mean, the point of speech is— Well, that is just very simply not the point. And it can be terribly, just terribly annoying when you're trying to conduct an interview or what have you, as you and I are here today."

"Perhaps . . . " Shapiro began with difficulty. "That is, perhaps, speaking of



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the interview, perhaps there's something you'd like to ask me."

"Ah," Beale said. "Right you are." He smiled, then frowned. "But the thing is, old man—I'm afraid I'm not all that familiar with . . . If you could help me out a bit. That is, perhaps we'd best stick to rather general concepts."

Shapiro nodded. "If you wish. What . . . for example, were you thinking we might—"

"Yes," Beale said. "Hmm. Well, I suppose we might talk about your . . . oh, impressions, for example, of the country. . . ."

Shapiro looked at him. "I only arrived last—"

"Last night," Beale said impatiently. He drummed his fingers on the tape recorder. "Well, but just generally, you know. Just something . . . spontaneous."

Shapiro pressed his fingers to the corners of his eyes.

"Not acceptable. I see, not acceptable," Beale said, bitterly. "Well, in that case . . . we could talk, for example, about what it feels like to come down here as an American."

"As an American?" Shapiro said. "I'm not *down* here as an American. I'm not down here *as* anything. I'm down here as a *pianist*."

"Yes," Beale said. "Quite."

Heat began to creep over Shapiro's skin as Beale stared at him.

"You know," Beale said, "I've always wondered. And this is something that I think would be very interesting to the radio audience. How do instrumentalists feel about their relationship—that is, via music, of course—to the composer?"

"What are you—" Shapiro began.

"Well, the very *word*—" Beale said. "That is, the word *literally*, well, it literally *means*—well, instru*men*talist. I mean, you're a—"

"Excuse me," Shapiro said. "I've got to . . . get to a phone."

Shapiro fled into a system of corridors and polyplike lobbies or reception rooms. Oh, to be alone! The men's room? Maybe not. Well, actually, there was a phone booth. Shapiro sat down inside it, shutting himself into an oceanic silence. Beyond the glass wall people floated by—huge, serene, assured, like exhibits. Shapiro leaned against the wall. He rested his hand on the phone as though it were the hand of an old lover. Absently, he stroked the receiver, then lifted it, releasing a loud electronic jeer—the sound, as silence is not, of emptiness. He would tell Beale that he was unwell, that he had to go rest.

Shapiro paused at the entrance to the restaurant. Beale was sitting at the table alone, his narrow shoulders hunched and his spaceship head bent over the tape recorder as he spoke into it. There was urgency in Beale's posture, and his face was anguished. What could he be saying? Shapiro took a step closer.

"Ah!" Beale said, clicking off the machine with a bright smile, as though he'd been apprehended in some mild debauchery. "Get through?"

"Excuse me?" Shapiro said.

"Get your call through?"

"Oh," Shapiro said. He sat down and passed his hands across his face. "No."

"No," Beale agreed with unfocussed sympathy. "Oh, it's all so difficult. *So* difficult. Now—" He smiled sentimentally. Amazingly, he appeared to have completely forgotten he'd been in the process of attacking Shapiro. "Not to worry—we're going to get a very nice little segment about you. In fact"—he twinkled slyly—"I've already done something by way of an intro. Your name and so on, you're down here for the festival, you'll be playing the García-Gutiérrez. . . . Hmm." He removed his glasses to study a crumpled piece of paper. "And, let's see." He turned on the machine and spoke into it again. "You've played the piece before with great success . . . Mr. Shapiro, I understand." He nodded encouragingly and indicated the machine.

Shapiro looked at it. "Yes," he said, wearily.

Beale gave him a wounded glance. "In fact, you premièred the piece in the U.S., I believe."

Shapiro closed his eyes.

"Yes," Beale said. He took a deep breath through his nose. "Well, *any*how, that was back in, let's see . . . nineteen . . . goodness me! You must be very fond of it."

"Well," Shapiro said, "I mean, it *is* in my repertory. . . ."

Beale emitted a giggle, or hiccup. "I have a set of little spoons," he said. "Tiny little silver things. For olives or something of the sort, that someone gave a great-aunt of mine as a wedding present.

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And somehow *I've* ended up with them."

Shapiro opened his eyes and looked at Beale.

"Well, I don't throw them out, I mean, do I?" Beale said. "I say." He frowned. "Are you not going to . . . ?" He waved at Shapiro's plate.

"No, no," Shapiro said. "Go ahead. Please."

"Thank you." Beale switched off the tape recorder and placed Shapiro's full plate on top of his own empty one. "We'll go on in a minute. And I think we'll get something nice, don't you? Most people like doing radio. It's a lovely medium, lovely. Do you know what I especially like about it?" He interrupted himself to eat, then continued. "One meets people. Oh, I know one does in any profession—it can hardly be avoided. But I mean one *goes out* to meet people, on an equal basis. The voice—it's freeing, wouldn't you agree? Yet intimate. There one is, a great glob of . . . oh . . . pork pie!" His eyes gleamed briefly with lust. "But I mean all one's qualities and circumstances just . . . globbed together, if you see what I mean. The good, the bad, the . . . pointless . . ." He paused again, and rapidly forked food into his mouth. "But with radio, you see, there's a way to separate out the real bit. And all the rest of it—I mean one's body, one's face, one's age . . . even, even"—he glanced around as though bewildered—"even the place where one is sitting! Well, one is free of it, isn't one? One sees how free one really is.

"Great *leaps*. Teleportation. The world is so . . . *roomy*. So full of oddments. But there's that now-you-see-it, now-you-don't quality about life that makes one so very nervous. Danger, as you pointed out just now, yourself. Danger simply everywhere. Everything destroyed, lost, forgotten . . . Well, that's what they want, you know, most of them. '*There's nothing about it in the reports*,' they'll tell you. They'll say it straight to your face. Of course there are ghosts, people say. I suppose that's some help. But a ghost is simply not terribly . . . *communicative*. They haunt, they grieve, that sort of thing. But it's all rather general, you see. Because they don't much really talk.

"Oh, didn't you just love it when you were a boy? It's raining outside, your mum's still working in the shop, you haven't a friend in the world, then you turn on the radio, and someone's talking—to *you*. Oh, my darling! Someone is talking to you, and you don't know, before you turn that radio on, who will be there, or what thing they've found to tell you on that very day, at that very moment. Maybe someone will talk to you about cookery. Maybe someone will talk to you about a Cabinet minister. And then that particular thing is *yours*, do you see what I mean? Who *knows* whether it's something worth hearing? Who *knows* whether there's someone out there to hear it! It's a leap of faith, do you see? That both parties are making. Really the most enormous leap of faith." He paused to devour the food remaining on Shapiro's plate, and then looked helplessly into Shapiro's eyes. "I mean, I find that all enormously, just enormously . . ." He shook his head and turned away.

SHAPIRO set his alarm for 6 A.M., and slipped out of the hotel before Penwad could come for him, consequences be damned. *Ha-ha*—the day was his! Screechy traffic flew cheerfully through the streets, and toxins gave the air a silvery, fishlike flicker as the sun bobbed aloft on waves of industrial waste.

Shapiro walked and walked. He passed through grand neighborhoods, where armed guards lounged in front of high, white walls. And he passed through poor neighborhoods, where children, bloated with hunger, played in the gutters, their eyes dreamy and wild with drugs. Beyond the surrounding mountains lay the countryside—the gorgeous, blood-drenched countryside.

In some parts of the city Indians congregated on the sidewalk. Some sold chewing gum or trinkets on the corners, some seemed to be living the busy and inscrutable life of the homeless. Their clothing was filthy and tattered, but glorious nonetheless, Shapiro thought, glorious, noble, celebratory—like the banners of an army in rout.

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other people. At home, in the last five or ten years they had encamped in Shapiro's neighborhood. At first he thought of them as a small and temporary phenomenon. But now they were everywhere—sleeping in parks or on the pavement, ranging through the city night and day, hungry and diseased, in ragged suits and dresses acquired in some other life.

Everyone had become used to them; no one remembered how shocking it had been only a few years earlier to see someone curled up in a doorway, barefoot in freezing temperatures. Most of the time they were just a group at the periphery of Shapiro's vision. But when a student failed to show up for a lesson, or no concert work materialized, or the price of the newspaper went up, or some unexpected expense arose, Shapiro's precious hands would tingle. Injury? Arthritis? Even as it was, daily life was beginning to eat away at Shapiro's small savings. And at such times Shapiro would see those *other* people with an individualized and frigid clarity, would search their faces for proof that each was in some reliable way different from him, as though he were a dying man approaching the gauzy crowds waiting for judgment.

And they—what were they seeing? Perhaps he and his kind seemed a ghostly population to *them*—distant, fading. . . . Perhaps at some terrible border you'd simply leave behind everything that you now considered life, forget about once precious concerns, as though they were worn-out shirts or last year's calendar or old lists of things that long ago it had seemed important to accomplish.

Oh, it was probably true, as Caroline had sometimes said, that his fears were irrational. That he'd always find some way to manage. But when the door closed behind her that day he ought to have understood—yes, he thought, that was the moment he ought to have understood—that success, the sort of success Penwad's letter seemed to promise for him again, was something he could just, finally, forget about.

But he had understood nothing; he'd simply sat there numb—for hours—until Lady Chatterley threw herself forward in a frenzy of carpet shredding. "Stop that," he'd said. "Stop, O.K., please?" He'd flicked a finger at her rear, and she'd leapt, snarling. The truth was he had always been a little afraid of the cat. She was Caroline's, but Jim, evidently, was allergic.

Shapiro supposed that, to whatever extent Caroline was thinking about *him*, she would be imagining him in debonair company here, taking part in animated and witty conversations of a sort no living person had ever experienced. Shapiro felt short of breath, as though Caroline were suffocating him with a pillow. "This is a wonderful opportunity for Aaron," she could be assuring Jim at this very instant. "Really it is." Oh, yes. *He*, Shapiro, must be happy so she could be.

An Indian child playing nearby in the street skinned a knee and howled for his mother. Shapiro felt an almost uncontainable sorrow, as though he were just about to cry himself. But to cry it's necessary to imagine the comforter.

Caroline had never cared what things were really like. He'd once overheard her saying thank you to a recorded message. Everything was nice, pleasant, good. If he spoke truthfully to her, she couldn't hear him. She despised no one. Those who were not nice, pleasant, happy simply ceased to exist.

Shapiro was ravenous. He entered an inviting little restaurant. Inside, it was very dark, but low-hanging, green-shaded lamps made a pool of light over each table.

The waiter spoke no English, but was agreeable when Shapiro pointed at a nearby diner's plate of soup. But there had been a time—truly there had—when Caroline actually loved him, had been fascinated by him, not just by his reputation. For a moment he saw her distinctly. She stood holding Lady Chatterley, gazing into space with a baffled sorrow. "Caroline—" he said.

Had he spoken aloud? Three men at a neighboring table were staring at him with a volatile blend of loathing and amusement. All three were mammoth. One appeared to be a North American; he and one of the others wore pistols, visible even in the restaurant's pleasant gloom, beneath their shirttails.

The waiter, bearing soup, interposed himself; Shapiro gestured fervent thanks. He took a spoonful of the soup. It was clear, and delicious. *Food*, he thought. Plus rent. Plus utilities . . . Yes, tonight the stage of a concert hall, a tuxedo. A party, champagne, adulation. But tomorrow it was back to cat fur.

The waiter arrived with a second plate for him, huge and unexpected. A pretty selection of things that seemed to have been cooked in the broth. Mmm. Shapiro leaned into the light of his hanging lamp to poke around at it—carrots, onions, white beans, cabbage, celery, a small . . . haunch, something that looked . . . like . . . a snout. . . .

One of the men at the next table chuckled softly. Shapiro glanced at them involuntarily again, and they stared back, their faces framing the teardrop of light from their hanging lamp. Then one of them, still staring, reached up and unscrewed the bulb.

THE enfeebled musicians threw themselves on García-Gutiérrez's last, idiotic, triumphal chord. What had happened? Shapiro felt as though he'd awakened to find himself squatting naked in a glade, blinking up at a chortling TV crew that had just filmed him gnawing a huge bone. Had he played well or badly? He hardly knew. He'd played in a frenzy—the banal sonorities, the trivial purposes, the trashy approximations of treasures forged in the inferno of other composers' souls. Lacerating ribbons of notes streamed from his hands as he tried to flog something out of the piece, but it had simply sat there over them all—a great, indestructible, affirming block of suet.

The sparse audience stopped fanning themselves with their programs and made some little applause. Seething with confusion and misery, Shapiro stood to take his bow, and caught a glimpse of a man who could only be García-Gutiérrez, opaque and dignified in the face of tribute. At the sight, Shapiro reëxperienced the frictive response of his skin, seventeen years earlier, to the man's blandishments, like an acquiescence to unwelcome sensual pleasure.

OUTSIDE, Penwad resumed his post at Shapiro's elbow. "We'll just stick around here for a few minutes," he said nervously, "then round everyone up and get going to the reception. Oh. I don't believe you've met. Joan."

"That was lovely," Joan said. "Just lovely. You know, we looked for you at your hotel today. We felt sure you'd want to see our Institute of Indigenous Textiles."

"Oh, Lord—" Shapiro floundered. "Yes! No, absolutely. I—"

"We left messages at the desk," Penwad said.

"Well," Joan said. "Those *people* at the desk . . . "

Night had ennobled the Center. Musicians and members of the audience milled about in the uncertain radiance of stars and klieg lights. A slow, continuous combustion of garbage sent up bulletins of ruin from the hut-blistered gorges, which were quickly snuffed out by the fragrance drifting down from the garlanded slopes of the Gold Zone.

Penwad pointed out various luminaries. There was a Cultural Attaché, a Something Attaché, several Somethings from the Department of Something—it was all a matter for experts.

"And do you see the lady over there?" Joan said, nodding discreetly in the direction of a stunning woman with arched eyebrows and a blood-red mouth. She was bending toward a boy who appeared to be about fifteen. "Our hostess. The reception for you is at her house. And her son. Well, as you see. They're identical. You'll enjoy talking to him. Perfect English—he's going to boarding school up in the States, and he just loves it. He loves to meet our visitors. The father's cattle, you know. Special, special people. Josefina's a marvel. You're not going to believe the house. She's a real force behind culture here. And, you can imagine, *some* of these wives . . . "

"Wonderful people," Penwad said. "And of course *you* two know each other from way back."

García-Gutiérrez had joined them, murmuring thanks to Shapiro. He was as handsome as before, though he'd be over sixty—a great tree of a man, at which age was hacking away fruitlessly. His loaflike body was still powerful; his long arms and legs, the musculature so emphatic one felt aware of its operations beneath the very correct clothing, the straining neck and jaws, the hooded eyes. "I feel that you brought something new to my music tonight," he was saying. "Something of a darkness, perhaps." In the man's lingering examination Shapiro felt the blind focussing, adversarial and comprehending, the arousal of the hunter. "Very interesting . . ."

Oh, that night seventeen years earlier! When it was reasonable for Shapiro to assume that he himself was going to be one of the favored. That he, too, would be respected, dignified, happy . . . The audience that night! How gratifying Shapiro had found their ardor then, how loathsome now, in memory. How thrilled they had been, seeing their own bright reflection in all the weightless glitter.

"We'll talk more, you and I, at the reception," García-Gutiérrez whispered, and glided off with Penwad and Joan to a huddle of musicians, who watched their approach with alarm.

Shapiro's heart jumped and blazed. People were beginning to float toward the parking lot. He played *better* now than he had then, but it made no difference—*no difference at all.* And those nights at the stage door; the faces, golden in the light, diamond earrings winking in the gold light . . . All the beautiful women. Gone now. No matter. What was it they'd adored? Those ardent glances, warm in the glow of his fame, the first shock, at the stage door, of Caroline's great, light eyes. Af*firm*ing, af*firm*ing—oh, what was he to *do*? They couldn't even put him in the decent hotel! Caroline was walking down the street. She wore a dainty little dress. The sun was on her hair, but black shadows swung overhead, and battling armies clanged behind her in the dust. Men and women lay on the sidewalk, their torn clothing exposing sticky lesions. One of them shifted painfully and held out a disintegrating paper cup. Caroline paused, opened her purse, and took out a quarter.

"Are you all right?" someone asked. Shapiro blinked, and saw the boy, the son of the woman who was having the reception. "You must be famished." He regarded Shapiro with the merry, complicitous look of a young person who anticipates approval. "What a workout for you, I think, that piece of G.-G.'s. But we'll have plenty of food back at home—the cooks have been racing around all day. Oh! Well, look at this. *He's* smart. He brought

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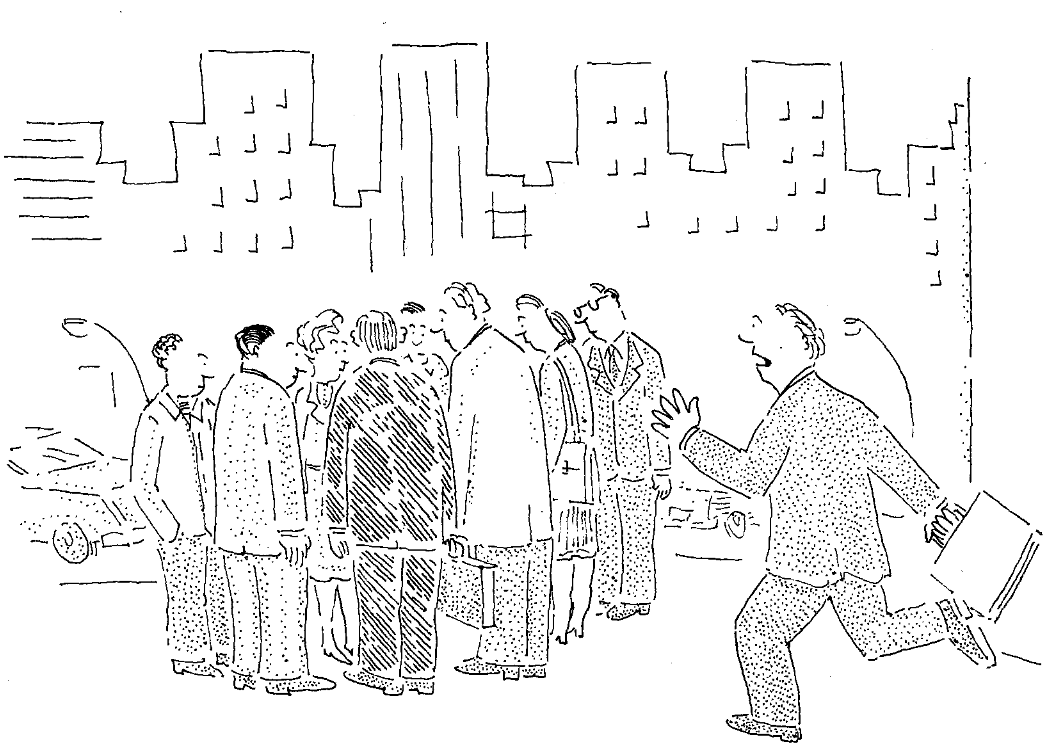

"Let me through—I'm the victim!"

• •

his own." The boy directed an amused glance toward Beale, who was ambling toward them, disembowelling an orange.

"Hello," Shapiro said. The boy's tone—despicable. He hoped Beale *hadn't caught it.*

"Would you care for any?" Beale said. "I'm afraid it's somewhat . . ." He nodded to the boy, who nodded distantly back. "You know," he said to Shapiro, "I'm sorry if I lost my bottle a bit last night. I tend to go on, from time to time, about one thing and another. Hope I said nothing to offend."

"Not at all," Shapiro said. *It made no difference at all.*

"Good good." A pink and rumpled smile wandered across Beale's face. "Goody goody."

Beale was making a complete mess of his orange. A small piece of peel had lodged in his webby tie. The boy was looking at it. "Oh," Beale said, glancing up. "Sorry. Difficult to handle. You know, it's strange about oranges, isn't it? They're so alluring. Irresistible, really. I mean, that color, for example—*orange.* And the *glossiness.* And that delicious smell they have. But it's all very strange. I mean, what good does it do them? They can't enjoy it. At least, so one supposes. All their deliciousness, do they get any fun out of it? No. It only gets them eaten. Isn't that strange? I mean, what is it for, from their point of view? I suppose you might ask the same of a flower. Flowers have sort of got it all, don't they. Looks, scent . . . But they have absolutely no way to appreciate that!" He giggled. "For all we know, they think of themselves as grotesque."

The boy was considering Beale with a dreamy, meditative look. His stare idled among the stains on Beale's suit. "Excuse me," he said. He smiled briefly at Shapiro. "I should go find some of our"—he glanced at Beale—"guests."

Beale gasped. "Did you hear that?" he said. "Little swine. Vicious little prick. As if I were going to crash the party! As if anyone could crash their fucking miserable party—they'll have half the fucking *Army* at the gate."

"Mr. Shapiro, Mr. Shapiro," someone was calling.

"It's Joan," Shapiro said, hesitating. He heard his name again. "Just a moment!" he called out. "Just a moment," he said to Beale. "I've got to—"

"Little putrid viper," Beale was saying, as Shapiro hurried off.

"We're ready to leave now," Joan said cheerily as Shapiro approached. "Everyone's gone down to the parking lot."

"Just a moment," he said. "I'll be right—"

"Don't be long," she sang with warning gaiety, and tweaked the lapel of his tuxedo.

"I'll be right—" he said. A tuxedo! He might just as well be wearing grease-stained overalls with his name embroidered on the pocket. "One more minute." He hurried back to find Beale, but Beale had disappeared.

"Hello?" Shapiro said. "Hello? I just wanted to—" But where could Beale have gone to? How arrogant that young boy was! How— Well, and the fact was, Shapiro thought, a man in livery could hardly afford to turn up his nose at a sloppy suit. "Hello?" he said again.

For a moment there was just a gentle surf of night noises, but then Shapiro made out Beale's voice, faint, very faint. Following the sound, he saw Beale, a dark shape, crouched in the corner of a concrete trough that must have been intended as some sort of reflecting pool.

Beale was speaking into his tape recorder. His voice had a stealthy, incantatory tone. "And now . . ." But the little *noises of the night* were washing away his words. " . . . take you to the party I promised you. It's . . . prominent family here."

There was an oily stain, or fissure, Shapiro saw, at the bottom of the trough. "And any important artist from . . . And what a beautiful . . . high, white . . . and tasteful objets d'art. But tonight . . . to take you out into the . . ."

Shapiro stood as still as he could and strained to hear.

"How lovely it . . ." Beale crooned into the machine. "Fountains, flowers . . . And . . . of chirpings! Croakings! Can you hear, my darling?"

Beale held the tape recorder up in the lifeless trough. Shapiro shuddered—a slight chill was coming down from the mountains.

"And those other sounds—do you hear?" Beale said. His voice was growing louder or Shapiro's ears were adjusting, seeking out the words. "The little plashings?" Beale said. "The fountain, yes, but what else? Not Spanish. But a language, yes! Just so. A language that's much, much older.

"Yes, because we're right across from the servants' quarters. And right there, on the servants' portico, the children are playing. The Indian children. Their mothers are all inside, serving little goodies to the guests. Can you hear the chatter behind us, of the guests?" Shapiro closed his eyes. Yes, he could hear it, the chatter, the pointless chatter. And smell the orange-scented garden. Yes—and he could see the children, just beyond the fountain, with their black, black hair, and shrewd, ravishing little faces.

"Good," Beale said. "Yes. And one of the children has a piece of stone or crockery. The others whisper together. They're joining hands—they seem to be inventing a game, don't they? Or reinventing. Some sort of game. Maybe they remember . . ."

Shapiro's name floated up from the parking lot. They were beginning to shout for him. *Yes, yes,* he thought fiercely, and held up a hand as though both to forestall and to shush them. *In a moment . . .* He sat down, as quietly as he could manage, on the cool concrete. Another moment and he'd go.

"When I first came to this country," Beale was telling the tape recorder, "the sky was a blue dome over the highlands. People had more food then, and weren't so afraid. When you went hiking through the villages, suddenly there would be a waterfall, and fifty, a hundred, two hundred women, swaying along the mountain, coming to do their washing."

Ah! Along the mountain, coming closer. Their faces were in shadow still, and indistinct. But any minute, any minute now . . .

"I wanted to speak to them," Beale said. "But how could I? I was only an apparition! But—are you listening, my darling? I know they're still there—they'll always be there, beyond the curtain of blood." Beale stretched himself out in the trough, tucking the tape recorder under his head like a pillow, and a delicious sensation of rest poured into Shapiro's body. "I'm tired now." Beale patted the tape recorder. "I think I'll sleep. But it's going to be all right. Because the first thing. In the morning. When the sun is up again and shining? I'll start off. And finally we'll speak. Please be there with me. They'll be so happy. I know they will. Because everyone has something, some little thing, my darling, they've been waiting so long to tell you. . . ." ♦

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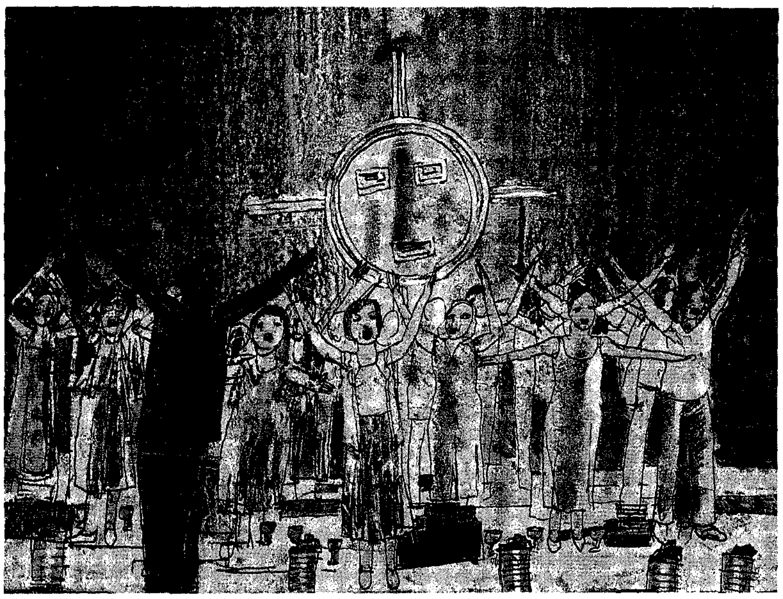
THE CRITICS

MUSICAL EVENTS

DESERT SONG

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS



Michael Tippett's 1952 "The Midsummer Marriage" receives its New York première at the City Opera.

IF Michael Tippett had ever had it in him to despair, which seems most unlikely, then "The Midsummer Marriage" would have given him cause. He began to plan this, his first opera, around 1940. There are signals of it in the oratorio he was then writing, "A Child of Our Time," in which he took a contemporary news story—the assassination of a Nazi diplomat by a Jewish boy, and the terrible reprisal—as a parable of light that will go on glowing through darkness. The opera was to be a continuation and a fulfillment of that work: a Resurrection to its Passion, a drama of regeneration in which light and darkness would be revealed as necessary to each other, and would be reconciled. But there were frustrations. An attempt at collaboration with a poet, Douglas Newton, fizzled out, and when Tippett eventually forged his own text, as he had done for the oratorio, all the friends who saw it advised him to think again. Still, he went ahead, and in 1952 finished the score. Then there was more waiting, for it was only after the "Ritual Dances," from the second and third acts, had established themselves as a concert suite that Covent Garden presented the opera, in 1955. And the tale appeared to be ending there, with a problem-ridden production and almost unanimous disdain for the libretto.

The opera's fortunes didn't begin to rise until 1963, when the BBC broadcast a studio performance. Five years later, there was a new Covent Garden production, out of which came a recording, in 1970, that was a cult success in this country as well as in England. Since then, there have been other productions in Britain (including two in 1985, when the composer turned eighty) and around the world. The American première was given in 1983, by the San Francisco Opera. Now the piece arrives here, in a production by the City Opera, whose general director, Christopher Keene, has announced his hope of presenting all four of Tippett's later works for the theatre.

To the extent that the performance history of "The Midsummer Marriage" is a victory of resilient optimism—a story not unlike the one conveyed within the opera—Tippett's survival to witness it is heartening. He was there on opening night, onstage with the cast at the end of the performance, and though he moves with difficulty now, he cut a tall and glad figure, in a jolly yachting outfit of pale-blue jacket, mid-blue pants, pink bow tie, and casual white shoes. (By his standards, this was sombre dress.) He and "The Midsummer Marriage" have lived into a time no longer worried by the presence in an opera of so much dance or so much malfunctioning text: Rameau and Philip Glass have taught us the joys of the one, Purcell and Stockhausen those of the other. Moreover, the work's festival of world mythology—Celtic, Greek, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, all tumbled together with the voices of Yeats, Eliot, Schiller, Valéry, and George Bernard Shaw, under the auspices of Carl Jung—can't confound us anymore, even if that's partly because Tippett's long life has stretched from one age of spiritual gallimaufry into another.

But whether the opera is more than a hopeful hodgepodge, more than a monument to wishful thinking, is a question that won't go away. Tippett's story invites us to suppose that two young people, Jenifer and Mark, come to a magic wood to be married, bringing along a bevy of high-spirited friends. They meet at a temple, the abode of two mysterious Ancients and a company of dancers, but their first encounter with each other finds them out of joint. Jenifer says she wants not love but truth: she climbs a stairway and disappears. Mark thereupon dives through some gates into the bowels of the earth. Jenifer's father, King Fisher, arrives in pursuit and tries to take command of the situation. The Ancients ignore him, but his secretary, Bella, follows his order to get the gates opened: she summons her boyfriend, Jack, "a mechanic," to do the work. However, when a disembodied voice (identified in the third act as that of King Fisher's clairvoyant Sosostris) sings out a warning, Bella takes fright, and the hapless Jack is torn between her caution and King Fisher's insistence. At this point, Jenifer and Mark return, and voice their respective visions of purity and physicality. They are now rivals, not lovers, and at the climax of their psychic attle each goes off where the other ame from: Jenifer through the gates, Mark up the stairway.

The second act, within the borders of love scene for Bella and Jack, presents hree ritual dances as if in the elements f earth, water, and air, each dance being hunt in which a female animal pursues male. Then, in the third act, King isher summons Sosostris, who comes n as "a huge contraption of black veils." When her aria moves from oracular obcurity into a vision of Mark and Jenifer n the point of coition, King Fisher calls halt. He unveils his seer, and discovers nly Jenifer and Mark together in radiant ansfiguration. At a gesture from them, e dies, after which the final ritual dance, f fire, liberates them to sing an ecstatic uet. Then all the magic appurtenances ll away, leaving the couple and their ompanions as at the beginning but with e marriage now complete.

One can, to be sure, find holes in this ory. The Ancients, who seem masterl at the start, soon decline into alterately sneering and cryptic observers. ome events—Jenifer and Mark's exange of places at the end of the first t, for example—are motivated more by the composer's pattern than by any sort of musical or dramatic necessity. And the status of Sosostris is uncertain: though she's introduced as King Fisher's private property, her voice, a sturdy contralto, seems to bring in a tide of truth and musical balm with an authority quite beyond his factitious sway; however, when her veils are stripped off there's nothing there. Perhaps we can see a clue here to the nature of the piece, as a weird compilation whose only point is to cause music to be uttered.

If we take that view, then the spatchcocked shambles of the libretto really doesn't matter: what matters is the outburst of lyric rhapsody and dancing exuberance in the music. At City Opera, though, the libretto is taken all too seriously, and the music not seriously enough. The director is Francesca Zambello, who makes the brave attempt to render the opera in terms of "the American landscape, our own myths, icons, and rituals"—and the even braver attempt to do so on a shoestring budget. Her designer, Kevin Rupnik, furnishes her with a square acting space surrounded by curtains inscribed with indigo drawings suggesting Monument Valley. The Ancients become nineteenth-century figures in severe black—Mormon settlers, perhaps—while the soloists and the chorus are in neutral, soft-toned clothes that could be contemporary, and the dancers appear as if in practice attire of loose-fitting tops and long shorts. The second act is played against a backdrop that reproduces an Albert Bierstadt painting of a canyon flooded by a yellow sunburst, and the outer acts feature Native American symbols aloft in neon: a red Earth emblem, rather like a tumescent omega, and a blue Heaven sign, of one semicircular dish inside another, contribute appropriately male and female indexes of Mark's and Jenifer's destinations in the first act, and a faintly comical yellow sun isn't so out of place for the merry picnic that begins Act III.

But there are two larger problems here. One is that these new and unrelated mythologies—mythologies of the desert, of the staunch pioneer, of the wilderness inhabited only by light, of the lost wisdom of extinct peoples—compound and magnify the multiplicity of image and allusion that's already there in the libretto. The other is that this isn't

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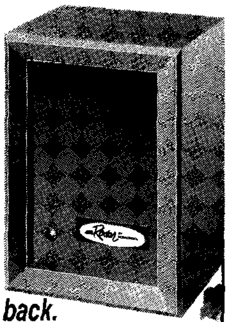

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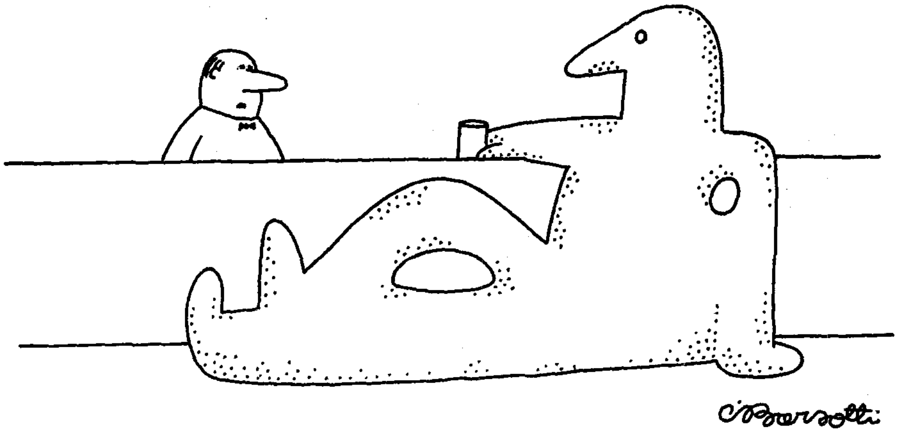
where the music wants to be. The look is bald, and bald, too, the lighting, by Heather Carson—even brutal in its excessive use of footlights and low-placed blocks of lamps at each side to throw gigantic shadows onto the draperies. Whereas the musical gestures suggest a European tradition of the enchanted wood, the view here is of a stark empty space. Dappled flutes, distant horn calls, and choral paeans to the emerging sun have no place on this stage, where the only concession to all the mention of shading trees is a gigantic proscenium arch of three lopped trunks. And it isn't as if a new magic location were being conjured up. Of course, the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico have their own sacredness, but it's a sacredness of space, not to be imparted by a curtained-off square.

Ms. Zambello's other major intervention also seems designed to emphasize the matter of the libretto (psychic integration through ritual) rather than that of the music (joyful presence at something not wholly understood). She has Mark and Jenifer appear in the second act, led on like zombies as the ritual dances proceed. The chase narratives specified by the composer are suspended: Susan Marshall's choreography is a more abstract display of grace and sexuality, featuring a male-female pair as surrogates for the dumb principals. Action overtakes allegory. Instead of being another view, the dancing is part of the same story, a story that now ends not with the union of Mark and Jenifer but with that of Mark and the lead dancer, Strephon, seated together in the middle of the stage as the music ends. This feels imposed and mean-spirited: distrustful of the opera's metaphor of marriage as a stabilization and completion of personality. Tippett surely is dealing not with a Mark-Strephon, whose two halves have to learn to admire one another, but with a Mark-Jenifer, whose two halves must learn to understand one another. Nevertheless, the greater mistake is that of overestimating the libretto at the expense of the music.

Mr. Keene, who conducts, began the opening performance with buoyant espousal of the other side. The introduction, with its accelerating attacks and quick, tucketing lines, was lively with enthusiasm, and the orchestra's Broadway swagger was apt for a composer who has long been an American at heart: the affiliation goes back at least to "A Child of Our Time," with its gospel choruses. One scented Mr. Keene's eagerness to make this first professional staging of a Tippett opera in the city into an occasion. But though his zest appeared not to diminish, the exhilaratedness it generated quickly grew blunt, and not only because of the continuing absurdity of an opera theatre whose air-conditioning covers any silence or pianissimo with an expectant drumroll. The athletic instrumental rhythms—the festoons of triplets, the sprung syncopations—were rarely precise enough; the textures often sounded muddy; and the violins, which carry so much of the responsibility for vitality in this score, were hampered by strained tone.

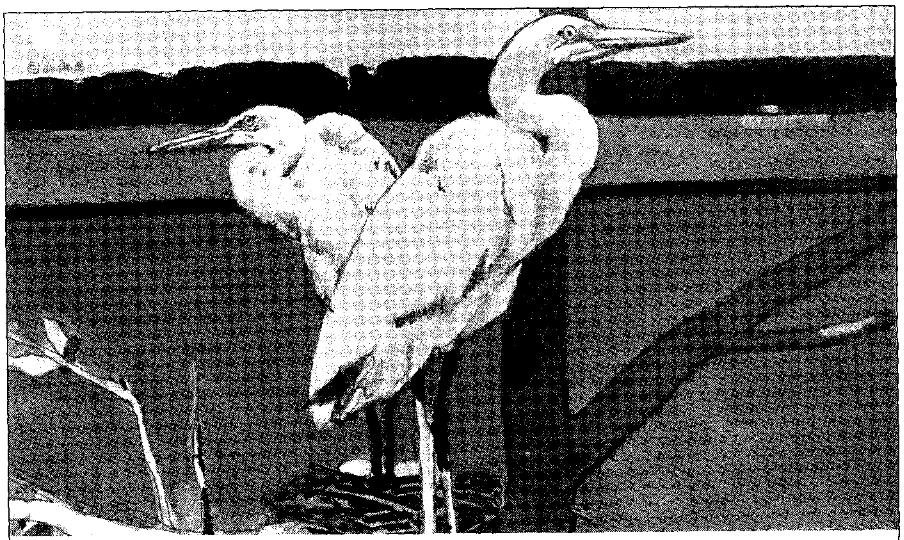
Some members of the cast sounded out of sorts, too—maybe because of what they were hearing from the pit. Dennis McNeil as Mark had the free, fresh, appealing tone necessary for the young swain's lyrical effusions, but Nina Warren, opposite him, had vibrato problems, especially in the high-flying passages required by Jenifer's quest for a paradisal realm of pure mind. Jan



"You want to run a tab?"

Opalach was also below his best as King Fisher. He came into strength at the end, but before that this capitalist-materialist had seemed a weedy sort of threat. Much more effective, vocally and dramatically, were the secondary pair: Elizabeth Futral was neatly in tune with Bella's fluent, feeling line and brisk demeanor, and Brad Cresswell offered a supportive, gentle-voiced Jack. There was also a strong, warm Sosostris from Jacalyn Bower-Kreitzer, matching the production's one striking invention (and its one display of expense). The shrouded box for the future appearance of Jenifer and Mark came topped by a square of nine television monitors, over which Chris Kondek's video effects could show us Ms. Bower-Kreitzer's singing face in intensified color.

Of the larger fabrication that is the opera, orchestral weakness left most of the work's strengths unrevealed, since it's the orchestra that should be telling us what we most want to know. The drama of renewal and maturing, whether or not in a Southwestern setting, is not so much empowered by Tippett's score as excitably followed and rejoiced about. For the music's purposes of flown, gleeful witness, a magpie libretto—one full of opportunities for rush and wonder—is much more use than a soberly sustained myth, which is why, finally, all criticisms of the text are beside the point. We can take what happens onstage how we like, as rejuvenated truth or charlatanry, and we can see Jenifer and Mark either as mythic agents or as young people with fanciful notions. What the music confers is the composer's view, a view whose abundant generosity is irresistible in a decent performance but also limited by being outside and not behind the action. It's a imitation that shows itself in the way he melodies race and cavort—however narvellously—against the tug of harnony that wants to call them to account. By his escape, Tippett dances into litheness, and into a youthfulness that has tayed the hallmark of his music. That is iis triumph. But when "The Midsumner Marriage" reaches its settlement nto A major, as Jenifer and Mark open heir eyes to each other, what we hear is ıot the joining of animus and anima but nstead the slow exhalation of the omposer's desire that such a blessing ould be. ♦



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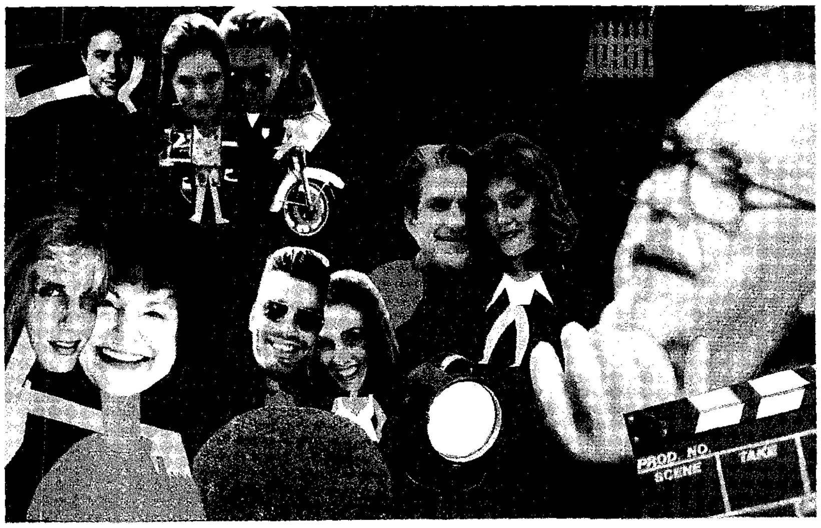
CARVERVILLE

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

IN his wildly ambitious new movie, "Short Cuts," which will open the New York Film Festival on October 1st, Robert Altman uses the short fiction of Raymond Carver as the raw material for a latter-day "Nashville." The new film's opening sequence, in which helicopters spraying for Medflies swoop down over several Southern California neighborhoods, serves to introduce the nine separate sets of characters whose stories Altman will tell. The characters are linked, momentarily, by their reactions to the ominous sound of choppers in the night sky; the spraying creates a kind of communal feeling of unease, and this anxious, unsettled mood will prove to be the only unifying principle of the disparate narratives that follow—until the climax, three hours later, when an earthquake provides the picture with another sudden, invasive force that the characters can respond to more or less simultaneously. In every sense, "Short Cuts" is an even more radical narrative high-wire act than "Nashville" was. The stories (and fragments of stories) that flickered in and out of view in "Nashville" felt, despite their apparent randomness, connected to each other in essential ways. The opening scenes of that picture introduce most of the characters by placing them in a huge traffic jam on a highway into Nashville. It's an accident, a quirk of fate, that they're all stopped together on this particular hot stretch of road, but their convergence isn't entirely arbitrary. Before everything came to a standstill, all of them were headed in the same direction, and for similar reasons: they have all, spurred by individual circumstances, been drawn to the capital of the country-music culture by the music's implicit promise of community and shared purpose—by the way the songs, and the cheerful, spangly images of the performers, seem to make something clear and beautiful and celebratory out of the loneliness and rigor of rural life.

"Nashville" ultimately presented an ironic take on the idea of community: its characters, driven by their hopes, wound up united in hopelessness, singing "It don't worry me" after witnessing a devastating, senseless act of violence. The people in "Short Cuts" share even less than that. As we watch the copters hovering over their houses, signalling each in turn as an important place in the sprawling geography of the movie, we admire Altman's ingenuity and the astonishing virtuosity of his editing, but we're not immediately engaged by the material itself, because there's no emotional cohesion to these first quick glimpses of the characters' lives. Earl (Tom Waits), an alcoholic chauffeur, drops into the diner where his wife, Doreen (Lily Tomlin), works the counter; at a chamber-music concert, the camera lingers on a blond,



Robert Altman with some of the lead players in "Short Cuts."

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ethereal cellist, named Zoe (Lori Singer); two couples in the audience, Ralph and Marian (Matthew Modine and Julianne Moore) and Stuart and Claire (Fred Ward and Anne Archer), arrange to have dinner together later in the week; Bill (Robert Downey, Jr.) and Honey (Lili Taylor), who look like students, sit in a smoky jazz club and listen to a sixtyish singer named Tess Trainer (Annie Ross); Ann (Andie MacDowell) and Howard (Bruce Davison) recline in their tastefully appointed bedroom to watch Howard's eleven-o'clock-news commentary on the Medfly situation; Lois (Jennifer Jason Leigh) does phone-sex service from her messy living room while feeding her baby, and her dim-looking husband, Jerry (Chris Penn), listens forlornly; Gene (Tim Robbins), a cop, and his wife, Sherri (Madeleine Stowe), argue fiercely, raising their voices above the noise of their squealing kids and their yapping dog; Stormy (Peter Gallagher), a helicopter pilot, calls his ex-wife, Betty (Frances McDormand), after his spraying run is over, and gets a chilly reception. Do all these people belong in the same movie? Maybe, but nothing in this formally brilliant opening gives us a clue to why Altman needs these characters, this specific configuration of events, relationships, and domestic settings.

When "Short Cuts" is over, you still don't know why. Altman has written, "I look at all of Carver's work as just one story." (Jean Renoir, the filmmaker whose work Altman's most closely resembles, said something similar about his own movies.) That statement makes a kind of intellectual sense—every good artist creates a unique, personal world, and individual works may run together in the audience's mind—but it's too abstract, I think, to be of much use to either a filmmaker or a viewer. The nine Carver stories that form the basis of Altman and Frank Barhydt's screenplay are sharp, tough-minded, stubbornly concrete products of a powerful literary sensibility. To urn what the writer conceived as discrete entities into a single work is, neces-arily, to impose meanings and corre-pondences from without, as readers and, f course, critics do. The "one story" that Short Cuts" can tell isn't Raymond Carver's but Robert Altman's. The coherence of this picture, cobbled together from bits and pieces of another artist's ision, is staked entirely on the persua-iveness of Altman's reading of Carver. In "Short Cuts" Altman seems to be trying to create a work of art out of pure sensibility—his own vague reader's intuition that Carver's inventions can be interpreted, adapted, and extrapolated in such a way that they will play off each other and produce a new, larger meaning. Altman's sensibility is formidable, and so is his filmmaking technique, but it's hard not to feel that he has placed too great a burden on them here. He hovers above his characters, spraying them with significance, and rarely touches down; he has to work too strenuously to maintain his overview, and, finally, the correspondences he wants us to see from up there start to look contrived, illusory.

Altman darts in and out of his characters' lives with his customary dexterity; he's a master of film rhythm. The movie's separate stories develop in parallel, but at varied rates: some hit the ground running and reach their dramatic high points around the middle of the picture; others start slowly and don't turn on the speed until they're in the stretch. But, despite Altman's exquisite control of pace, "Short Cuts" seems thin and uneventful: his smooth technique has the effect of turning the rich, impure stuff of Carver's fiction into something oddly homogeneous. Every moment in this picture feels pretty much like every other, and that's not because Altman has divined the single, compelling story that makes sense of all the crazy contingencies of the characters' lives; he simply imposes a single style on this complicated landscape, and tries to convince us (as perhaps he has convinced himself) that this manufactured uniformity is in fact a kind of truth.

Most of the stories in "Short Cuts" are about misunderstandings—often outright hostilities—between men and women. Gene is a philanderer and a liar, and his wife responds to his dissembling with weary contempt. Ralph, a doctor, is pathologically jealous, and goads Marian into confessing her single infidelity—a drunken tryst at a party, years before. Stuart, an affable sort, goes on a fishing trip with his buddies; they discover the naked body of a young woman in the river but don't report it until they're done with their fishing, and when Claire hears what her husband has done she can't bear to let him touch her. Stormy, frustrated by his ex-wife's indifference to him, sneaks into her house while she's away and destroys all her possessions (except the TV). Earl goes on a bender,

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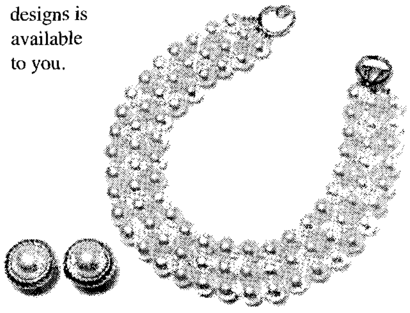

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and Doreen gets fed up. Jerry, after days of listening to Lois talk dirty to strangers on the phone, vents his anger by picking up a teen-age cyclist and smashing her head in with a rock. Bill, who's training to be a makeup artist, spices up his sex life with Honey by painting her to look like a murder victim and then taking pictures. Some of these unpleasant vignettes are based on incidents in Carver's stories; others—Stormy's rampage, Bill's photographs—have been invented by Altman and Barhydt. The juxtaposition of all these poisonous domestic relationships has the effect of turning the individual stories from which they are derived—closely observed, scrupulously specific small dramas, like "So Much Water So Close to Home," "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?," and "Jerry and Molly and Sam"—into a big, obvious generalization about men's brutality and women's capacity for endurance. When Carver's material won't quite support the screenwriters' thesis, they coarsen characters and exaggerate behavior to fit: the laid-off factory worker who tries to lose the family dog in "Jerry and Molly and Sam" has become the piggy L.A. cop Gene, strutting menacingly in his tight uniform; the brief, agonizing infidelity confession in "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" is here blown up into a long, ugly, and highly theatrical shouting match. The men's roles in these scenes are so crudely written that even wonderful actors like Robbins, Ward, and Downey can't do much with them. (And Penn and Waits are just about unwatchable.) The actresses are luckier: Moore, Tomlin, and Leigh all do terrific work here, and Stowe is a revelation—she gives a tough, witty performance that is unlike anything she has done on the screen before.

Two of the stories in "Short Cuts" seem to stand apart from the others. The scenes featuring Howard, the TV commentator, and his wife, Ann, which are adapted from the classic story "A Small, Good Thing," have a hushed, unforced precision that the rest of the picture mostly lacks. They're the parents of a boy, Casey, who has been hit by a car and has lapsed into a coma. Their story consists of nervous waiting, with annoying intrusions: a baker (Lyle Lovett), who doesn't know what has happened, keeps calling them, sounding irritable and nasty because a special-ordered birthday cake for Casey hasn't been picked up; Howard's father, Paul (Jack Lemmon), whom he hasn't seen in thirty years, turns up at the hospital to join the vigil at Casey's bedside. Paul—whose emotions seem all over the place—sits his son down in the cafeteria and tries to explain why he left his wife, Howard's mother, and the long, intense scene is a triumph for both actors: Lemmon's edgy, pleading sincerity is very touching here, and Davison's shifting reactions are miraculously subtle. The picture's other anomalous story line focusses on the jazz singer and the beautiful young cellist, who are mother and daughter. Their scenes aren't based on anything in Carver, which is much to Carver's credit. The story is shockingly banal: the hard-bitten old broad and the fragile daughter live together but can't communicate at all—different musical idioms, different world views, heartbreaking failure to connect, Q.E.D. Even worse, Ross performs several torchy, world-weary songs: Altman can't seem to get enough of her, and these mannered numbers suffuse the movie with a kind of cocktail-lounge bathos.

At the end of "Short Cuts" Altman takes a final stab at investing this reckless jumble of Carver's characters and his own sensibility with greater-than-the-sum-of-its-parts significance. He jiggles the frame for a couple of minutes, puts a low rumble on the soundtrack, and thus creates the substantial earthquake (7.4) that gives his characters a last, cathartic jolt. It's just a flourish, and its effect is purely formal: as in the opening sequence, an unexpected, disturbing event puts all these alienated people, ever so briefly, in the same boat. Maybe the point is that in this day and age Americans—men and women, members of the working and middle class—have nothing in common except the fleeting moments when they're all forced to face the possibility of an impersonal catastrophe. I hope that's not the point, because it's neither interesting nor true, and it's not worthy either of Raymond Carver or of the artist who gave us, in "Nashville," an endlessly complex vision of Americans' paradoxical yearnings for community. The apocalyptic end of "Short Cuts" is a quick, blurred flare of color that feels to me like an admission of defeat—like the moment just before the TV set goes black, after another aimless evening of channel surfing. ◂

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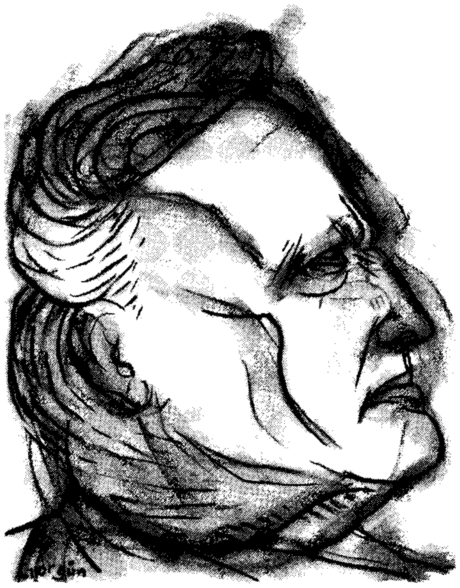
HAUNTED BY THE GOOD WAR

BY BRAD LEITHAUSER

JAMES DICKEY'S new novel, "To the White Sea" (Houghton Mifflin; $22.95), is set in Japan during the last months of the Second World War. In fewer than three hundred pages, its American hero, an Air Force sergeant named Muldrow, has his plane shot down in a bombing raid and, alone of his crew, manages to bail out; conceals himself within a sewage pipe that carries "the whole concentrated stink of Tokyo"; survives the subsequent fire bombing of the city; is savagely beaten by Japanese soldiers; hijacks a military truck; steals a boat and, with an improvised kayak-style paddle, reaches Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands. Actually, that's a truncated list. Muldrow also beheads an old woman; sews himself winter clothes with a needle he has fabricated from the arm bone of a sword-wielding descendant of samurai; has his thigh gored by "some kind of goat"; is nursed to health by a tribe of Ainu—aboriginal Japanese—and is invited to the ritualistic slaughter of a bear; and slits open a dead man in order to use his blood as an adhesive (Muldrow is seeking to camouflage himself in snow by covering himself in swansdown). No wonder if the reader, like the book's hero, winds up feeling battered at the novel's close.



James Dickey's "To the White Sea" explores the exigencies of survival during wartime.

"To the White Sea" is ambitious in far more than the dense range of tumultuous, grisly incidents it comprises. Dickey has resolved to hold the reader's attention by means of a character who has little education and seemingly no interest in sex or romance, in art or religion, in the people he has met or those he may meet. Muldrow is not much given to reminiscence, either, and the details of his past remain dim. He was reared in Alaska, on the north face of the Brooks Range, by a father who had perhaps "got into some kind of trouble . . . somewhere in the States." The boy's mother died before he "ever knew anything about her." Growing up, he had used snowshoes more than his "natural feet." Muldrow is by temperament a primitive whose profoundest ambition is to shuck what traces of civilization persist in him.

To criticize Muldrow for being unlikable would be accurate but off the point, given Dickey's unstinting pains to have him so. I suspect that in each successive draft of the novel (which was long in gestation: it arrives six years after Dickey's second novel, "Alnilam," and twenty-three after his best-selling first, "Deliverance") he strove to make his hero hardier, terser, chillier; Muldrow is, like the knife with which he dispatches so many victims, a thing of patiently honed steel.

This is in a dual sense a singular story: unusual and solitary. After the first twenty or so pages, when Muldrow embarks on his doomed bombing raid, all dialogue—indeed, human exchange of any sort except a trading of blows—virtually disappears. The book's closest forebear may be Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea." Both are painstaking solo accounts of the securing of food and

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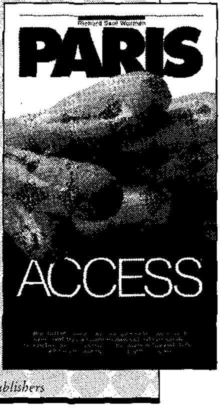

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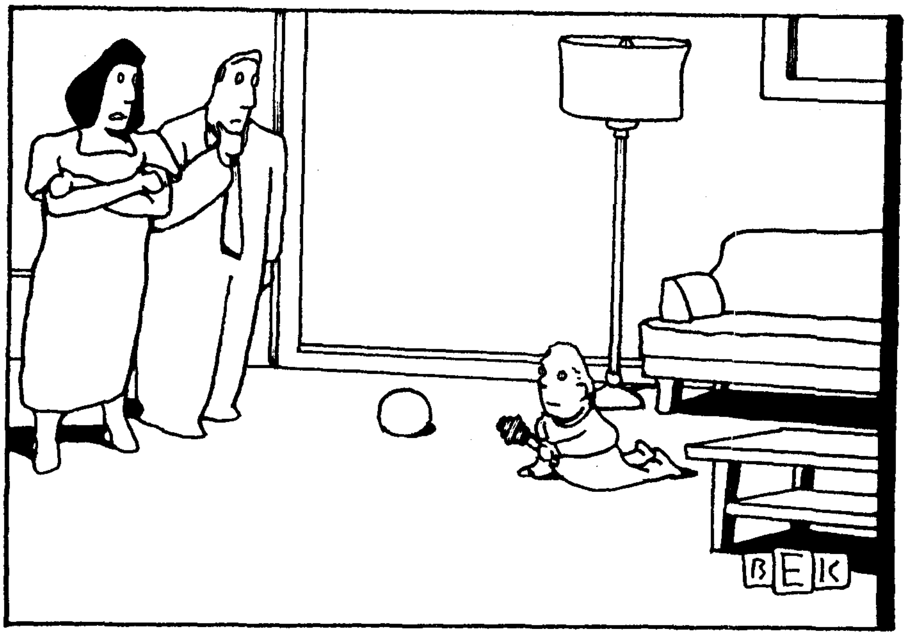

"He just doesn't do it for me."

• •

rest, detailed enough to resemble a survival manual. They share, as well, a preoccupation with Nature's indifference to our welfare, with masculine strength, with the nobility of hopeless causes.

"The Old Man and the Sea" is one of those modern novels, like Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" or Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited," which in penance for their popularity seem to demand that we apologize for liking them. In Hemingway's case, it's an apology I'd extend happily—convinced, as I am, that in its clouds and currents and stars and daybreaks his small novel contains some of the finest nature writing of our time. One might have expected that Dickey, the author of more than a dozen volumes of poetry, would likewise have pursued the beautiful directly, in sweeping prose. But, while Hemingway's tale unfolds in the third person, Dickey has allowed Muldrow to narrate his own account. In the book's aggressively flat and inarticulate opening pages Dickey makes it quite clear that Muldrow is far more adept with his hands than with his tongue.

Or is he? Hints of another Muldrow, one who harbors a coarse lyricism within, are also present from the outset. I was only seven pages into the novel when I came upon the phrase "he went an even deeper color, with veins and frustration," and it occurred to me that the book's chief rhetorical strategy was going to lie in placing poetry in the mouth of this unlikely figure—and soon, sure enough, the prose turned expansive. Huck Finn, too, apologized for his clumsy diction, and yet couldn't resist occasionally launching into grand cadences, those tributes to the Mississippi which have been called River Hymns. Muldrow might be said to have a penchant for Cold-Water Hymns. Someone for whom "the ocean ain't the ocean unless it's got ice in it," he is forever celebrating the allures of chilly water. In their homemade, slightly manhandled way, some of these passages are lovely. Here is Muldrow observing the calving of an Alaskan glacier:

> When the ice slid off the near side of it the brightest blue I ever saw in my life came right at us, it seemed like, so deep and pale it could have been some new kind of scientific thing, a new kind of light that nobody had ever seen before.

Or discovering a little waterwheel deep in a forest:

> A tree was right behind me, and in ever bucket as it started to lift, a reflection o branches and leaves was in it, trembling rocking, being held and raised with a lot o care, like the water in each bucket that wen by was worth more than the last.

For all Muldrow's social indifferenc (a detachment ultimately too cold an remote to be called misanthropy), h turns oddly accommodating when de picting the natural world; he has something of a poet's appetite for nicety of expression and a poet's gnawing vexation at the unbridgeable gap between Nature's pellucid objects and our blurry verbal replicas. The ineffable haunts him: "the thing nobody could say," "one of those that don't have words," "the gleam, it must've been, which is a word I don't use but I know the meaning," "Hurtled would be the word; I can't do any better," "In a plane there is not enough of a sense of—well, what would you say?—of *riding*," "It was the most intense, and the most pure, it was—well, you could say—secret," "I began to transfer my feelings—or soul, or spirit, or whatever you want to call it—to them."

At some level, icy Muldrow wants to do right by his readers.

BUT who wants to read about a cold-blooded, remorseless man who drifts across a landscape leaving corpses in his wake? Dickey has his work cut out for him. The charms of Muldrow's voice, slow to reveal themselves but eventually substantial, are one means by which he compels us through this brutal tale. Another is to set his book in wartime. Although Muldrow is subject to immediate imprisonment and execution, he is not a criminal but a soldier trapped in enemy territory. If his behavior resembles a psychopath's—at times he seems like one more American serial killer on the lam—he is nonetheless behaving just as his commanding officers would advise. The book raises uneasy, fruitful questions about the ethics of survival during warfare: Isn't Muldrow doing only what is expected of him? Is he to be commended or condemned when, desperately needing to shed his American combat gear, he murders a civilian for a set of clothes?

Unfortunately, Muldrow's final killng—he knifes one of the Ainu who have befriended him, in outrage over heir treatment of a bear—raises few uch questions and seems, aesthetically, a sizable misstep. It's the first time that Muldrow kills somebody whose death in no way benefits him. (In fact, Muldrow's ction puts him unnecessarily at risk.) Dickey's tale is one of escalating violence, and he apparently wants us to view this final slaying as a logical culmiation—one of those acts of brutality which critics tend to label "inevitable." But surely there are moments, and I think this is one, when it's a novelist's duty to avoid the unavoidable. The Ainu's murder seems less fated than formulaic, and with his death much of the book's ambiguity dissolves—maybe Muldrow *is* just another American psychopath. The "brightest blood in the world," Muldrow informs us at one point, is blood on snow, and this senseless killing has just that sort of intense, shocking brightness. But I would have preferred a murkier, subtler tale.

FOR readers familiar with Dickey's poetry, "To the White Sea" will seem a kind of rucksack stuffed with images and activities that have preoccupied him since the start of his poetic career, a third of a century ago. Once again, here are rivers, drainpipes, caribou, parachutes, pine trees, woodsmoke, cat's cradles, the glinting of knives, naked women seen through windows, bows and arrows, the belt of Orion. For those who share Dickey's fixations, the novel will provide an exhilarating ride. But even for those who, like me, feel distant from most of them, there's something appealing about the way in which, stalking his outsize ambitions, Dickey so obligingly lays himself open to censure. He is obsessed with birds of prey, and his poems and fiction are rife with hawks, eagles, ospreys. Yet in his dealings with that other bunch of heartless raptors—the critics—he effectively spreads himself wide open, Prometheus fashion, and declares, "Come eat of my vitals."

"To the White Sea" makes a very tempting target. It is unrelievedly tough, macho, hardboiled. Set in a war in which women were permitted little military role anyway, it admits virtually no women into its domain, either through action or through flashback; the only female who might plausibly be called a character is never granted a name. Muldrow, in his self-contained way, usually isn't one to dispense advice, but now and then he'll offer a bit of counsel like "Don't let anybody ever tell you blood is not good to drink" or "Just get yourself a spear and start throwing it." In "To the White Sea," as in much of his verse, Dickey seems to have made a compact with his muse whereby he has agreed to forgo attempts at lightness, dexterity, and wit in return for a steady supply of powerful,

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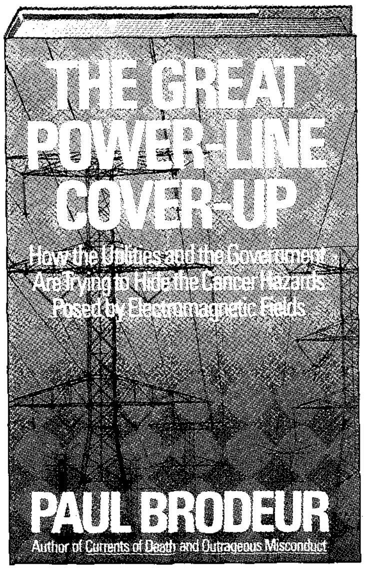
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gruesome images. They are the blood sacrifices that fuel his art.

No doubt combat is always horrific, whatever the principles it purports to champion. Still, for American veterans of the Second World War there is the double assuagement of having fought with overwhelming support at home and of having attained absolute victory. "To the White Sea" displays none of that pained examination of motives and justifications which one expects to find in fiction about, say, the Vietnam War. And readers know that before long, whatever happens to Muldrow, his enemies will be overthrown and the territory he creeps through in terror will be policed by his comrades-in-arms.

Dickey's book, however, implicitly affirms the notion that, combat being combat, trauma must result for vanquished and victor alike. "To the White Sea" speaks pointedly to the ongoing hurt of a generation of American soldiers—most of them, like Dickey, now in their seventies. (It speaks as well to Westerners who have lived in modern Japan, for Muldrow enacts a fantasy pervasive among *gaijin:* he passes invisibly through a landscape in which foreigners are accustomed to having their every movement intently, curiously observed.) The anguish of years of fighting outlasts the ravages of both the cities and the countryside. Today, the fire-bombed streets of Tokyo flaunt an unbroken, opulent flash and polish. Likewise, those islands in the Marianas from which the American bombing crews departed (including, a few months after Muldrow's final mission, the Enola Gay, bound for the crystalline blue midsummer skies over Hiroshima) bask in a fresh, tranquil prosperity. When I visited those islands, a decade ago, I found the streets dotted by Japanese honeymooners in matching his-and-hers pastel T-shirts, pedalling rented tandem bicycles, and I was struck by how the war, even at its peripheries, has—visually—healed over.

One hopes that, for Dickey, the gods of war will be propitiated in the end. In the meantime—as rifle fire crackles around the globe—this novel is a grim reminder that even in peace there may be no peace. For some of its veterans, a conflict that ended half a century ago continues to thud and snap and burn in the back of the mind. ♦

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

No Other Life
by Brian Moore
(Doubleday; $21)

RELIGION and politics are both transforming passions, and in both there is always the risk of losing faith. The title of Moore's new novel comes from the deathbed revelation of a woman who tells her son—the narrator, Paul Michel, a Canadian priest in the Albanesian Order—that "there is no other life." The phrase echoes ambiguously throughout the book, which is part thriller, part psychological portrait of a young man named Jeannot. Rescued by Michel from a poor hill town in Ganae, a thinly disguised Haiti, Jeannot, a *noir*, becomes a priest and then the President, whom the faithful call "Mesiah." For Jeannot, too, there is no other life, no other duty than the social revolution he tries, unsuccessfully, to bring about by combining the politics of ethnic liberation with his peculiarly charismatic Catholicism. You empathize with Michel as he watches his former student twist and twist again in the political winds; yet you also wonder whether Jeannot is the kind of character who can be known only from a distance, which is how one gets to know him here. By the end of this moving, reticent novel, you begin to realize why parables re always told from the outside.

The Men and the Girls
by Joanna Trollope
(Random House; $20)

TROLLOPE'S involving novel is not, as its itle suggests, a satire of the unequal war etween the sexes; nor is it—despite its ook-lined studies, Benjamin Britten, nd chilled white wine—a comedy of anners in which the characters' domestic nd emotional trappings are on equal foot- ng. Hugh and James are in their sixties, omfortably settled in Oxfordshire with omen almost half their age. Hugh—n aging television personality and the ther of four-year-old twins—is desperately ying to hang on to his celebrity status hile the spectre of a second career opening permarkets and golf courses looms. mes is a teacher, living happily in a ictorian town house with the adored ate, her prickly teen-age daughter, and is ancient Uncle Leonard. But when mes accidentally knocks an elderly inster off her bicycle in the rain, Kate calls him—to their mutual horror—a stupid old man, and their home begins to fall apart. Trollope's characters are lovable because they struggle primarily with themselves, and only incidentally with one another. But perhaps the most delightful aspect of this novel is its chosen agent of chaos—not the predictable luscious undergraduate but the formidable overturned spinster of Cardigan Street, who at one point yells at the grieving James, "Don't behave as if you were the first! Agamemnon had a terrible family life, remember!"

A Very Long Engagement
by Sébastien Japrisot; translated from the French by Linda Coverdale
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23)

FIVE soldiers in the trenches of the First World War are sentenced to death for shooting themselves in the hand. Four have left behind adoring women, but not one is so tenacious as Mathilde. She does not accept the official notice of her fiancé's death or any of the many explanations or accounts of it she digs up by dint of relentless research. She gets to know some of the condemned men's girlfriends, widows, and pals, and is often chided or warned to leave well enough, or bad enough, alone. But Mathilde has been limited to a wheelchair since the age of three; her betrothed was the only man ever to treat her as a normal woman. This book has been a best-seller in France, and it's easy to see why. Japrisot writes with warmth, and has a gift for rendering almost every character instantly likable. Mathilde's search engenders the conviction that a day could come when ordinary people refuse to engage in the wars that politicians begin.

GENERAL

Churchill: The End of Glory
by John Charmley
(Harcourt Brace; $34.95)

THIS substantial reassessment by a young British historian recalls those old-fashioned political biographies which used to chronicle every moment of their subjects' careers and all their dealings with once powerful figures. But as the reader settles down to enjoy the gossip of pre-First World War Westminster he can't help noting that Charmley emphasizes, if not exaggerates, Churchill's faults. The purpose of this retelling of familiar history soon emerges: to prove that the appeasers of the nineteen-thirties were more realistic than Churchill, and that Neville Chamberlain and his followers had a clearer sense of Great Britain's place in the world than Churchill, whose outmoded romanticism induced him to lead his nation into a war that squandered Britain's strength and cost it the empire. Yet Charmley's reinterpretation misses the feel of the period and its people, and he demonizes the United States to make his point, often misunderstanding American public opinion.

Sex Crimes
by Alice Vachss
(Random House; $21)

WITH this compelling memoir, Vachss, who was until recently chief of the Queens District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, takes her crusade against rape out of the courtroom and into the public domain. A footnote on the first page of her book reads, "The names of defendants and public figures are real. There is no reason to protect [their] identity. We're the ones who need protection from [them]." It sets the tone for the rest of the book. After graduating from Boston University, in 1974, Vachss joined Legal Aid in New York City as a public defender. She was fired for refusing to pay union dues and later joined the Queens D.A.'s office, becoming obsessed with the need "to up the stakes for sex criminals," and "go out there and fuck 'em up." Her memoir, a series of case histories dealing with every form of sex crime from stranger rape and incest to pedophilia, is as much a portrait of the author as of the criminals she prosecuted and the victims she helped, and thus it contains many of her own flaws: it is abrupt, harsh, demanding, and often hard to follow. At the same time, however, Vachss's willingness to expose herself, flaws and all, is her ultimate triumph. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

BLOCK 53, SECTION C, PLOT 7

BY MARK SINGER

WITH the Jewish High Holy Days approaching and various complicated thoughts on his mind, my friend Israel Teicher decided to visit the spot where, a year ago, his mother was buried. Izzy had missed the funeral—a consequence of not having been invited. More than thirty years ago, he fell in love with and married a woman who was not an Orthodox Jew. In Izzy’s father’s estimation, this was an unforgivable act of defiance.

Today, Izzy is an observant Conservative Jew. He retains the formidable skills and knowledge he acquired as a yeshiva student in the fifties. His wife, Luz, who was born a Methodist, in Puerto Rico, underwent a Reform Jewish conversion before she and Izzy married. In the eighties, a few years after earning a doctorate in molecular biology, Luz completed a Conservative conversion. Izzy is a social worker whose specialty is helping wounded families to remain intact. When he conducts therapeutic sessions with his clients, most of whom live in Harlem, he frequently quotes from the Talmud, the Book of Psalms, and the Book of Proverbs.

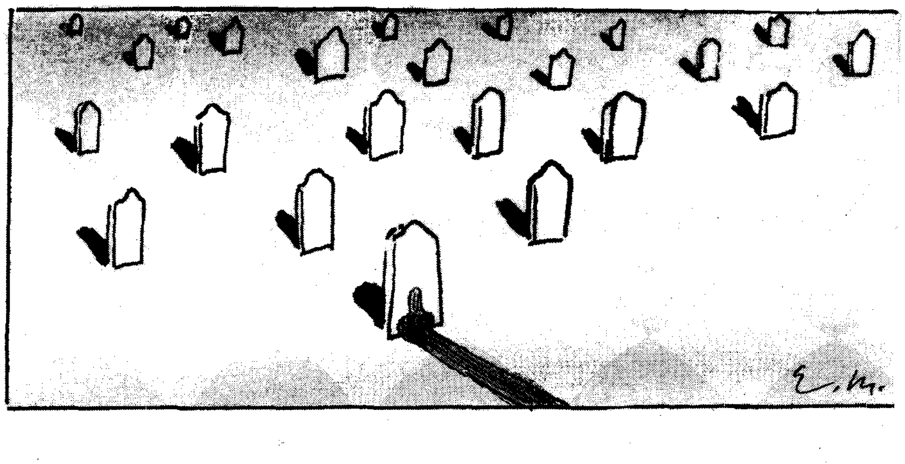
None of this would cut any ice with his father, whose response to Izzy’s marriage was to decree that, for all practical purposes, Izzy had ceased to exist. Izzy is convinced that his mother loved him to the end but, as a traditional Orthodox Jewish wife, spent the last thirty years of her life miserably forbidden to contact him. A niece phoned and gave him the news—too late for him to attend the funeral.

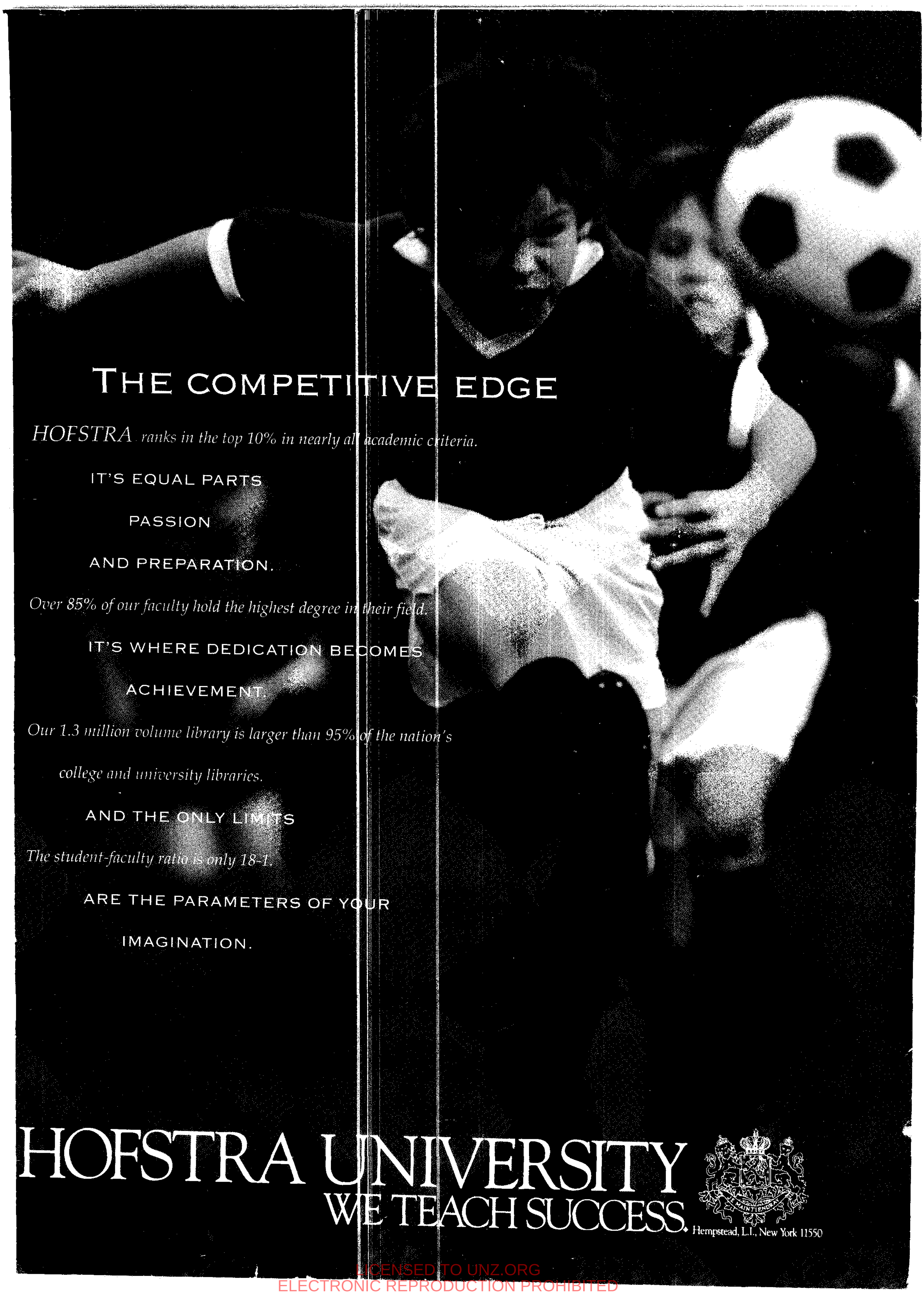
On a sunny Sunday morning, Izzy and I drove for about an hour—from Westchester County, where we both live, across the Hudson and down the New Jersey Turnpike—until we arrived at Beth Israel Memorial Park, in Woodbridge, a multiple-option facility that offers not only conventional underground interment but shelf space in those high-rise vaults I think of as cryptominiums. At the administration building, a woman consulted a computer and gave us the coördinates of the gravesite: Block 53, Section C, Plot 7. She handed us a map, and, after I paid a one-dollar security deposit, lent me a yarmulke. After guiding us to Block 53, the map ceased to be useful. For half an hour, we wandered along the densely packed rows of gray granite markers—Thaler, Kranz, Eisenberg, Zucker, Birnbaum, Kipnis—but failed to discover the name we were looking for: Ciporah Teicher.

Finally, after a trip back to the administration building to consult a more detailed map, we found it, in an open section, near a fence, in the shade of maples and chokecherries—on a five-foot-high marker, engraved only in Hebrew. Izzy borrowed a pen and some paper from me and transcribed the inscription—high-minded stuff that, he said, “has no reference to any of her personal attributes.” Then he said, “Well, it does say that she loved her neighbors. Which is true. She loved her neighbors. She did not hold any grudge. She did not permit anyone to say anything bad about anybody, including me.”

Izzy, who is fifty-seven, has curly gray hair, a goatee, hollow cheeks, an El Greco face. He wore a red satin yarmulke, chinos, white Nikes, and a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt. He knelt and removed some small stones from the ground. After placing one on top of the marker and two more on the plinth—one for his wife and one for their daughter—he said, “O.K., I was here. I have nothing to add.”

But that wasn’t true, for he then launched into a monologue that ran for twenty minutes and retraced the emotions of the last thirty years. I wanted to know how he would have responded if, a year ago, he had been asked which he thought more likely—that he would one day get a phone call of reconciliation from his father or that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization would sign a peace treaty. Without hesitation, he said, “Oh, Israel and the P.L.O.” As we headed back to the car, he added, “I wish my father a hundred and twenty years. But when his time comes, if I’m around—and I don’t know that I will be—but if I am around I will visit him too. I know exactly where he will be.” ◂





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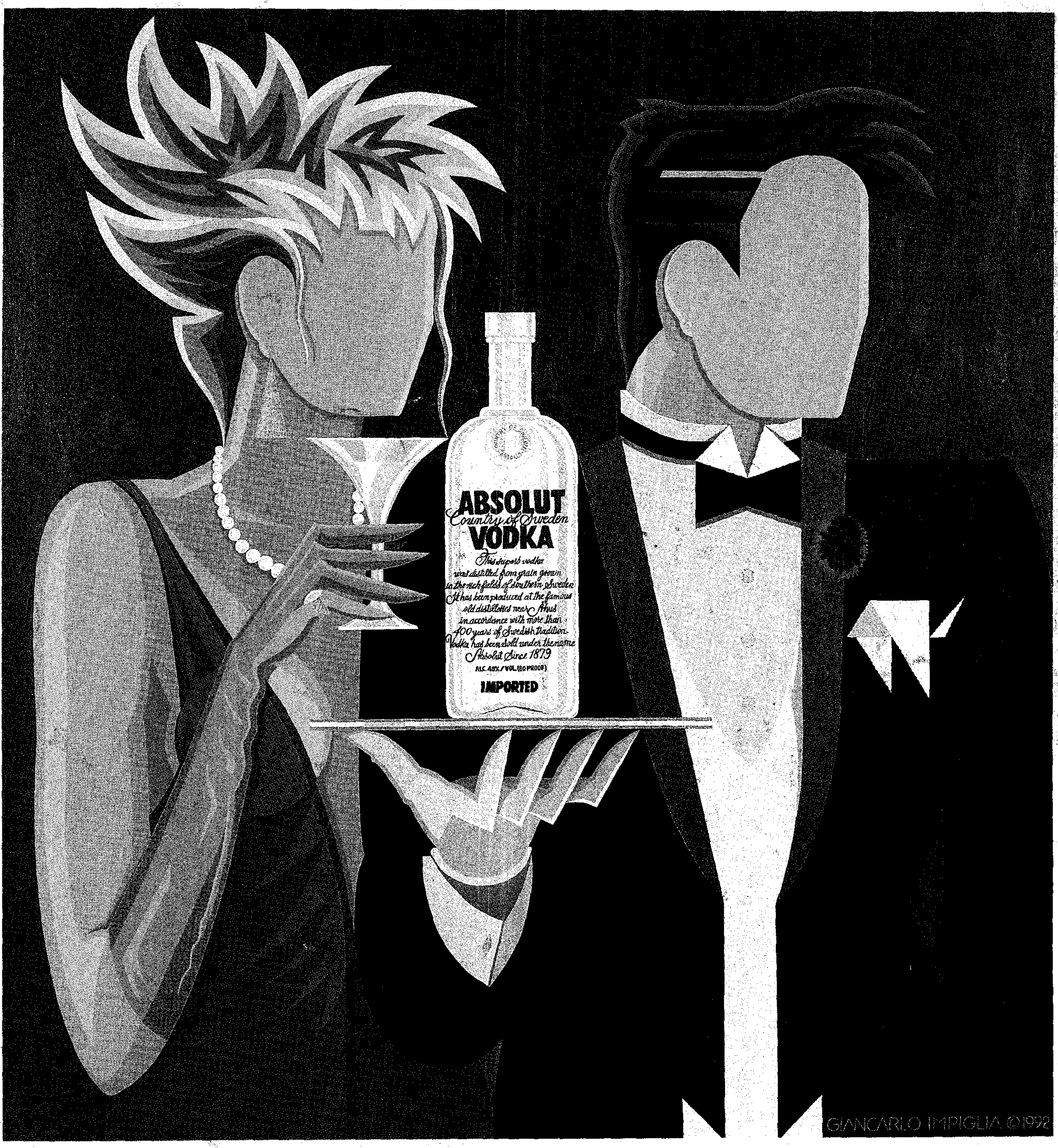

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